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[WAITING FOR THE VERDICT.]

SYBIL'S INHERITANCE;

A WOMAN'S VOW.

By the Author of "One Sparkle of Gold," "Evelyn's Plot," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XV.

Hope, like the gleaming taper's light,
Adores and cheers the way;
And still as darker grows the night,
Emits a brighter ray.

Goldsmith.

It was the morning after the memorable scene described in the last chapter, and Eunice, exhausted by her long and anxious vigils, and relieved from the anxiety that had kept her from realising her bodily fatigue, was wrapped in the deep and refreshing slumber which is so seldom enjoyed after early youth. So profound was the repose that she was not disturbed by the cautious opening of her door, nor the approach of quiet footsteps to her bedside, till a gentle touch which she afterwards believed to be a light kiss on her brow roused her, and she sprang up with a start.

"What is it? Is he worse?" she exclaimed as her eyes fell on the quiet features of Monica.

The sister smiled sadly.

"Poor child! are your dreams ever haunted thus?" she said, mournfully. "You have much, very much to bear yet, ere you are hardened by this world's cold blasts and treacherous pitfalls. But fear not, Eunice, for our patient. He will recover now. I have seen too many cases thus snatched from death's grasp not to judge with certainty of his state. Whatever may be in store for him, the danger of the raging fever that has been scourging his very life-springs is over, and it is but a question of time and of careful nursing how far he will regain his former strength. It was not of him but of myself that I came to speak, dear girl. I came to bid you farewell, Eunice."

The girl gave a faint cry as she grasped the white hand which was trembling in her own.

"No, no, you must not leave me just as I have learned to love you; and then he—I mean Mr. Mor-

dant—needs your care as much as ever. No, no, you cannot be so cruel, dearest lady! I feel as if you were my only friend, now that Lady Talbot is so changed to me. Oh! for my sake—for his, do not abandon us—at least, not yet—not yet!"

Monica looked down wistfully in the beautiful eyes turned so beseechingly on her, and there was evidently a struggle in her own heart ere she replied:

"My child, it cannot be! Trust me, Eunice, that were not the resolution I have taken an unchangeable one, I would not resist your innocent pleading. But it is impossible for me to remain here, except at a risk which I dare not encounter, and were it not for you, dear child, I would thankfully take the means of escape, ere it is too late. But you have touched my heart as I had never thought human being could win on me again in this world, and if the danger were to myself alone, I would dare much to comfort and protect you, my tender blossom. But it would betray trust and violate a solemn pledge were I to remain, and all that I can do is to bestow on you this, the sole remains of the worldly treasures which were once mine. See, Eunice, this ring is to all appearance like a hundred others, of like device and stones, till the secret is explained. Look here."

And she touched a tiny spring artfully hidden under a large ruby, which at once revealed a small plait of hair secured by a gold monogram, which was too minute to be read without the aid of a magnifier. The girl gazed with admiring interest on the flashing beauty of the massive but tasteful jewel, and Monica, after a slight pause, went on:

"I have kept this trinket, Eunice, for many weary years, as a wretched memento of the long-buried past; but to what avail is it for me, who have sworn never to mingle in earth's feverish vanities more? If I died it would be buried with me or pass into other and careless hands for its mere intrinsic value, and I feel a strange, irresistible impulse to give it to one who may remember the lonely sister with affection and sympathy; but remember, Eunice, there are two conditions that I make to the gift. You must promise me solemnly never to part with it in any ex-

tremity, and never to reveal the name of its donor. Will you do this and keep the pledge?"

"I will; I will do anything you wish," replied the girl, earnestly. "I know not why, but it seems as if you could understand me—as if I must obey any desire of yours. I never felt that with my mother, though I always tried to obey her as a dutiful child."

"Was that why you were willing to leave her?" asked Monica, quickly.

"Perhaps," said the girl, with a quick flush. "At least I was not so grieved and desolate as I perhaps ought to have been. She never loved me. I believe I was but a burden and a care to her. But I will never be so again," she said, with a proud flash in her eyes and a lifting up of the fair head with a haughty air, foreign to her usual gentle, girlish mien.

"Yet it is your natural home, your refuge," urged Monica, thoughtfully.

"Perhaps; but when I have once been exiled—sold," said the girl, bitterly, "I will never seek it more. I can earn my bread, even as a menial. I will not ask it of a parent who could lightly give me to a stranger. But this is selfish, idle," she exclaimed, suddenly, as she saw Monica's pained glances. "I only shrink from forfeiting your regard, dear lady, and I deserve to do so for my egotism."

"No, Eunice, no," answered the sister, gravely. "I believe in you, my child, though I may, perhaps, doubt the cool wisdom of a young, ardent nature, and should your aspirations be disappointed, should grief and trouble overwhelm you, then call me to your aid, and your appeal shall not be made in vain."

"But where?—how?" asked the girl.

"Send to the head-quarters of the sisterhood at Brussels," replied Monica, "and the letter will not be long in reaching me. I can trust a spirit like yours not to use the permission lightly."

"You are right," said Eunice, proudly. "I feel as if years had passed over my head since I left my childhood's home, and it will not be my fault, dear lady, if I need aid in my career. I can see now that it is not love or happiness to which I must aspire—not for such sweet dreams must I live; but for the cold,

hard realities which bring at least self-respect and independence. Sister Monica, you have at least taught me that lesson, whether for good or ill. I will never, never depend on the help or the love of others more," and proud, burning tears glittered in the large, bright eyes.

"Heaven help you to keep your resolution, my child," said the sister, gravely. "It may save you from danger and heartfelt, lifelong agony such as you can little realise. But if I am a harsh, I am a true and loving friend, Eunice, and time may prove the wisdom of my warning. Child, child! do not break my heart by your tears. If you knew—if you could but guess the bitter memories you conjure up—if you could but read my inmost thoughts at this moment, you would know that no trouble that can await your young, untired nature can be so bitter, so spirit-crushing as the agony which has seared my soul and well nigh hardened it against everything save the physical suffering which can neither deceive nor repay with ingratitude and mistrust. Eunice, Eunice! may Heaven keep you from the trials that have banished the very life-blood from its natural channels!"

"Mr. Mordant is sleeping and cannot be disturbed. Doctor Bayle is sitting in his room. If you would like me to call him," said Eunice, coldly, as Basil Mordant entered the ante-room of the invalid's chamber some three days after the crisis just described.

"Thank you, fairest saint," he replied, carelessly seating himself in a chair near to Eunice's. "I have no need, mentally or bodily, for the worthy Galen's advice or society. It is you and you only whom I come to see."

"I am far more unconscious of any reason. Mr. Basil Mordant can have for seeking my presence the stead of that of the good doctor," she replied, with a haughtiness that Basil could scarcely have looked for in one so completely untrained in the world's ways. "There can be nothing in common between us. Please to leave me, Mr. Mordant. It is not right for you to be here."

"Surely there is more in common between us than between you and my pining, half-dead cousin," he said, sharply. "Godfrey is nearly twice your age, I should think, and more like a ghost than a rational being. What claim can he have upon one so young and beautiful that you are willing to sacrifice all for him, while I, who certainly may lay claim to some ordinary attractions, strive in vain for a word or look?"

"I really do not understand you, Mr. Mordant," she said, flushing. "I have tried to do what was my simple duty to save a valuable life. When that is finished I have no farther sacrifice to make; I would have done the same for any one who needed me."

"Are you sure of that, Miss Lisle?" returned the young man, gazing searchingly in her crimsoning face. "If so, I would willingly have endured what my cousin has borne to excite the same feelings in your heart that appear to make you forget everything, shrink from every one else, and risk your own future prospects for his sake. Ah, Eunice, you, in your utter, fresh inexperience, little know the value of your own attractions, the wealth of your priceless love. From the first moment I saw you watching like a guardian angel over that corpse-like form in the dim morning light, which yet glittered like a glory over your fair brow—from that moment my heart has been torn with love and jealousy—jealousy of him—and love for you, Eunice, who are risking so much for him!"

"Mr. Mordant, this is insolent—cruel!" exclaimed the girl, hot tears rushing to her eyes. "How dare you speak of such things to me, alone and unprotected as I am? It is a cowardly, unmanly jest. At least, your cousin would not suffer such a mention of his name were he aware of the cruel taunts for which you use it."

"Pretty, unconscious Eve that you are, you little think how completely you are strengthening my shrewd conclusions," he returned, with a sarcastic smile. However, it is no wish of mine that you should be in love with Godfrey; and, indeed, I expect it is a mere girlish softness that is drawn to the helpless, especially if the said helpless ones are attracted by their sweet selves. All I want you to comprehend is how much more suitable and profitable it would be to listen to me, instead of wasting your interest on a half-crazed lover. Eunice, to drop a subject that seems to offend and irritate you, I will turn to more fitting words for your ears. I love you truly, devotedly, Eunice, and if you will trust yourself to me all that threatens you shall be averted, and you shall know nothing but happiness and joy and light and love. Will you not hear me? Am I so very hateful, so difficult to love, Eunice?"

"I do not know—I cannot tell," she said, hurriedly. "But you frighten me, Mr. Mordant; you

speak as if some great evil was threatening me. Please do not keep me in suspense."

"You are keeping me in suspense, Eunice—you do not answer my question. Can you love me—will you trust yourself to my care?"

"No, no—I cannot! I do not wish for anything but what I have. Lady Talbot is kind—very kind to me; she will always take care of me. Please leave me, Mr. Mordant."

"That is just what I must warn you not to depend upon," returned Basil, earnestly. "Yet I would fain spare you the pain, if you would but hear me, Eunice. Lady Talbot's feelings are poisoned against you; she considers you ungrateful. It is her intention to send you from her—to place you in the keeping of strangers, far from all that can make life happy and bright. Let me save you from such a fate, my beautiful one, and surround you with an atmosphere of love and brightness. I never felt before—I never shall feel again—as I do to you. I may have fancied I loved; but you, in your freshness, innocence, and womanly unselfishness, have touched my heart to the very quick. I am not deceiving you, Eunice, I swear it, by all that is sacred!"

"But I do not—I cannot accept it," she said, with a softer accent, as his tones grew more truthful and earnest. "It is impossible that you can really care for me—a simple girl whom you have known but for a few brief days. Leave me to myself. I will trust in my own innocence. Lady Talbot cannot be unjust when she knows the truth."

"Would you answer thus if it were my cousin that pleaded instead of me?" he asked, earnestly. "Eunice, you profess truth; can you, from your heart, tell me that you would turn and shrink away as you do now if he wooed you as I do—ay, on my very knees—to be his?"

"You have no right to ask, nor will I answer," she said, indignantly, snatching away her hand which he had grasped. "If you do not leave me at once I will call for those who will at least defend me from this insolent persistence on your part. I am not a simple girl, but I know that a true and honourable man does not act thus to a woman he wishes to win for his wife."

"Perhaps not," he muttered to himself, but so faintly that the words were not distinguished even by the girl's quick ears.

"Beware, Eunice," he said, aloud. "I have pleaded hitherto as I never pleaded before, but as you are dead to love I must warn you that I am not so tame and docile as to be turned from my purpose by a girl's caprice. You have already done me an unconscious wrong even in preserving the frail existence of the cousin who alone stood between me and rank and wealth. Do not add to that injury the gall and bitterness of his successful rivalry, or I will not pledge myself to abstain from any lengths that will revenge me on him, and either win or punish you. Eunice, I am of a jealous and imperious race, and I shall not believe my ancestry if you provoke me too far. Even now your fate and his life are hanging in the balance; it is scarcely a moment to attempt girlish imperiousness and caprice. I will obey you now, I will leave you to consider my words and to choose between love and cheerless disgrace and hardship. Ere many hours you may find it useful to make your election."

With a fierce flash in his eyes that utterly altered his whole expression Basil walked from the room, with so quick and noiseless a movement that even the inmates of the neighbouring sick chamber could not have heard his footsteps.

As the sound of them died away the proud spirit that had hitherto supported Eunice Lisle during the interview seemed to sink and weaken in the vague terror that his threats conjured up. She was so helpless, poor child. Since Monica had departed with the mysterious secrecy that baffled even the strictest search of the disappointed and bewildered physicians, Lady Talbot had remained invisible to her, under the pretext of fatigue and alarm—as to an infection that did not exist, and Rainforth's cold and taunting hints were as palpable but galling insults which stabbed like fine and poisoned arrows.

No wonder that even her high spirit sank under the fresh and yet more threatening apprehension which Basil's unscrupulous love had called forth; no wonder if she well nigh panted after her quiet Breton home which she had vowed never again to seek, even though it would be intolerable to her after the excitement her young spirit had tasted both of pleasure and pain.

At the very moment when her whole thoughts were occupied by this chaos of conflicting and outraged feelings a slight sound brought a fresh terror to her. It was only Doctor Bayle, however, who sought admittance, with his blunt yet kindly imperiousness of tone.

"You are wanted, my dear, Mr. Mordant has awakened wonderfully refreshed and begs to see you. Of course, he must be humoured at present, and I have

come for you. In a very short time now I hope to release you from any farther attendance on so uncongenial a scene for so young a creature."

The girl's head was averted, perhaps to conceal the relief of such an announcement, and she hurriedly left the room ere Doctor Bayle could complete the oration which hung on his lips.

"Humph! she's in a great hurry," he muttered. "If it was that handsome young cousin I could comprehend it, but, as it is, why, it's contrary to nature to imagine such a thing. However, women are queer creatures, even to an old fellow like me."

Meanwhile Eunice had glided softly into the sick-room and placed herself in the very seat which she had occupied during that fearful night-watch which would never pass from her mind.

But the melting eyes that were turned upon her were all unlike the fevered, wild orbs that had so often thrilled her with terror, and the rich, soft tones in which the invalid addressed her did not even recall to her senses the sharp, unnatural shrillness of the fevered voice which had so often claimed her pining service.

"I owe you a debt that I can never repay, Miss Lisle," he said, softly, "and I can say nothing better than that I am to be thus beholden to you. Can you comprehend me, Eunice—for by that soft name it is so natural to call you—can you enter into such feelings?"

"You owe me no debt. I am so glad, so more than repaid by your recovery, if I have been able to render the slightest service," she whispered, with eyes lowered beneath their blue-veined lids.

"If," he repeated, "if, Eunice, do you know that even in my wildest delirium I was conscious of your presence, your voice, and that it possessed a charm which recalled me to the material world when I seemed to be apart from it for ever. I owe you life—ay, and more than life—reason, and all that can make life tolerable. Will you not exercise the spell for my happiness in that life which you have given back to me, fair enchantress?" he added, smiling with an ineffable sweetness that gave a rare charm to his pale features.

"I can do nothing," she replied, with an effort at self-possession. "You are quite beyond such weak and puny aid, Mr. Mordant. You, with such numberless means of enjoyment, can need such imaginary witherers?"

"I do—I do, Eunice," he replied, earnestly. "What are all the hollow possessions and gaieties of life to a lonely and disappointed man? I have no one to shed any light or love or peace on my lonely path, and the one delusive dream of my early youth was so rudely dissipated that it left me more dreary and hopeless than before. Eunice, the gloom that has hung over my late years, and sometimes almost driven me to despair, is chased away before your sunny light and beauty. It is selfish to speak thus, and yet—and yet—I feel in this my hour of weakness that I must cling to my sole hope—sole ray of sunshine—till it eludes my grasp for ever. Oh, Eunice, speak! Do you think you could learn to love me, or, at least, to be happy in my worshipping love for you? I have heard of your worse than orphanhood, dearest. The good doctor has told me all, or I might not even dare to speak thus, for true love makes us sadly fearful, my Eunice. Mine?—alas, alas! how dare I utter that precious word, save that I think my deep devotion may yet win you, fair angel of my life?"

The girl drank in the soft tones of that rich and plaintive voice, so touching in its frailties and feebleness. She felt rather than saw his tender, melting gaze, and the noble manliness of the features which had been painted on her own heart by many an hour of anxious watching. Oh, what delicious, tempting sweetness there was in the prospect open before her—in the idea of passing a life with one so true and loving as in her girlish instinct she believed him to be; to depend on him for guidance and protection; to minister to his every wish and want. It was like a fairy dream, and, like such a dream, it was dissipated by rude and bitter realities.

When the imploring "Speak, Eunice—will you be my own, my idolised wife?" came again on her bewildered senses she woke as from an exquisite, tantalising trance to a shivering remembrance of Basil's ruthless threats, and of her own obscurity and lowliness.

"No," she murmured, lowering her head on her clasped hands, "no—I will not—I cannot!"

"Why? Can you not learn to tolerate, to be happy with me, Eunice?" he said, plaintively. "Am I so repulsive, so hateful to you that even the home and shelter I can offer to you, the love, the peace, does not avail with you?" "I might have known it," he murmured, turning away his languid head. "I, a shattered wreck, and she, in the very springtime of her youth and beauty."

"No, no, no!" she exclaimed, eagerly. "It is not

so, Mr. Mordant; but I dare not—I cannot listen to you. You are high-born, clever, wealthy, mingling among your equals. I am a young, weak, ignorant, lowly born girl, and when your fancied obligations to me were forgotten, and your present helplessness passed away, you would repeat what you are now doing from mistaken feelings. No, no; leave poor Eunice to her own sphere, her own natural, humble obscurity," she said, clasping her hands with a childlike self-pity. "It will be better for both—for both," she repeated, shivering.

"Is that all—is it only from that fancy, dear Eunice?" he said, softly, with a bright, gleaming smile.

She saw it. She knew that such a plea would soon be over-ruled by his earnest truth, and that if she desired to avert the danger which she in her inmost heart believed did await him, she must steel herself for yet more painful efforts.

"No," she replied, "it is not from that alone." "Has some one else wooed you then—some happier, younger man?" he said, sadly. "Is that the cause of your coldness, Eunice?"

She did not reply.

"One word—surely I may at least claim that at your hands!" he said, reproachfully. "I may surely ask the poor consolation of knowing that I am but yielding to a more congenial, a more acceptable suitor—that you will be safe and happy with another—or," he added, suddenly, "perhaps with one near in blood to me—with my cousin."

"No, never!" she exclaimed, vehemently, "never with him! Do not dream of such madness, Mr. Mordant. I would rather be as near the grave as you were but a few days since as look forward to such a fate! But," she added, more calmly, "that does not make my resolution less certain. Be generous, Mr. Mordant; do not press me farther, and ask what I cannot and will not answer. Ere many months you will thank me for thus saving you from an unequal, unhappy marriage."

She rose hastily from her seat, as she fancied she could distinguish approaching steps coming to the door of the apartment, and placed herself in a recess, where her troubled face would better escape observation.

She was not mistaken. In a few seconds the door opened; Basil Mordant looked in; then, with a light "Oh, I beg pardon! I did not mean to intrude," closed the door and retired.

"This is dreadful!" she muttered, impatiently. "Mr. Mordant, I must leave you, and I implore—I adjure you, never mention this subject, or never expect me to enter your presence more. Even now I cannot tell what mischief may have been done. May Heaven bless you!" she added, hastily, seeing the look of pain upon his features. "But I mean it in all true kindness and—"

Poor girl! she could indeed have added "true, deep love," but the words were choked down in her inmost heart, and she only touched lightly the pale, cold hand with her innocent lips, and hurried from the room.

The sacrifice had been made. The dearest prospect that could have been opened before her had been closed by her own hand, the sweetest cup dashed from her lips; now she had but to suffer, with what fortitude and patience that unselfish and heroic love could give in such a life-long sorrow as hers promised to be.

"But I have saved him—I have saved him!" she murmured. "I could see that anering smile, those glittering eyes, as he looked at his noble cousin. This is no idle enmity, and at least it shall not be on my conscience that it worked evil for my sake. No, no; better a life's misery than that!"

She cast herself on a large fauteuil that stood in her half-furnished sleeping-room, and clasped her hands tightly together, as if to repress the faint, sick, cold shiver which her late ordeal had spread over her whole frame. As she did so the massive ring which Monica had given her pressed painfully the slender palm, and she started with a reacting energy at the memories it recalled.

"She suffered in patience," murmured Eunice, "and I can suffer also. It is weak—unworthy of one whom he loves to give way thus. Noble Godfrey—at least I can strive to deserve your affection, your trust, even though I may never see you more. Better far to have known you—have been honoured by the choice of that heart—than never to have tasted what such happiness might be. Yet I am very, very sorry for a life's dream to have passed," she said, plaintively. "Perhaps it is a sign that my life will not be long, then it were better to have no one to mourn my loss."

It was a fanciful idea, but the girl's mind had been nursed and matured in an atmosphere of poetry and romance, though her noble woman's heart was practical and loving in its childlike simplicity and truth.

CHAPTER XVI.

And Basil said: "A grateful mind
on a by-own owes not, but still pays, at once
debited and discharged."

"My lady wishes to speak with you, Miss Lisle, as soon as you have had your breakfast," said Rainforth, coolly, on the following morning as Eunice entered the room where the morning meal was served. "She is not up yet. Indeed, she is extremely unwell, and I must beg that you will not agitate her in any way when you go to her. It is a great pity that she should have such unnecessary trouble, poor dear lady."

Rainforth flounced out of the room with a disdainful air that spoke at once of devoted indignation for her lady and contempt for the unfortunate girl who had been foolish enough to excite her displeasure.

Eunice's breakfast was nearly untasted, a presentiment of evil haunted her too surely, even had not the agitation of the previous day deprived her of any appetite for food; and in a brief space she was standing in the dressing-room, where Lady Talbot reclined in a morning wrapper with the small tray by her bearing the tempting viands which seemed to have been equally neglected with Eunice's less delicate fare.

"I have sent for you, Eunice Lisle," said the lady, in cold, severe tones, such as the girl had never heard from her before, "to express my extreme disappointment and displeasure at your improper and disgraceful conduct, and to inform you of the measures I intend to take in consequence. Nay, not a word. My health has been already too shattered by the excitement you have occasioned; I cannot endure any arguments or falsehoods by way of defence."

"Pardon me, madam," said the girl, in soft, low tones that could scarcely have grazed on the most delicate nerves. "I do claim the right of the humblest to know my accusation, then, if I cannot explain my conduct with truth, I will bear your condemnation in silence and submission. What have I done to deserve such heavy displeasure?" she asked, with a shade of that haughty spirit that shone out at times so gracefully from her young beauty.

"Oh, if you demand a hearing, of course I will not refuse it," said the irritated lady; "but only on the condition that you say simply Yes or No when I inquire into the truth of the allegations against you. I presume you cannot deny that you have spent days, ay, and well nigh weeks, in the sick-room of a strange gentleman, putting yourself forward on every occasion when your services could possibly be offered, and actually remaining in his room alone at night, in which extraordinary situation you were surprised by his relative, Mr. Basil Mordant? Remember my condition!" she added, sharply, as Eunice's lips parted. "Was it so or not?"

The girl bowed her head.

"And also, were you not alone with Mr. Basil Mordant for some time, a day or two since, when you drew him on to make idle, thoughtless love to you, which was a simple insult to any young woman of propriety?"

Again the crimson flush of indignant shame, which might be interpreted as consciousness of guilt, rushed on the delicate face, and Lady Talbot smiled bitterly.

"It is well," she said; "I am answered. You need not speak; I am glad you have so much grace left as to blush at the impropriety of such degrading proceedings. Next, were you not, even so late as yesterday, discovered with your hand in that of the gentleman whose weakness pleads his only excuse for such folly, and exchanging some meaningless and disgraceful love passages in his case also?"

"Madam, I must, I will be heard!" interrupted Eunice, passionately. "My attendance on Mr. Godfrey Mordant was entirely ordered by Doctor Bayle and the nurse, and I did nothing except by their directions. Mr. Basil Mordant was cruelly insulting to an unprotected girl, but he cannot, he dare not say that I tolerated his degrading advances."

"It is easy to say so, Eunice, but unhappily I have reliable evidence to the contrary; and I believe you can scarcely dare to deny the last accusation on your conduct which gives so sadly the lie to your plausible professions. Moreover, there is one other mystery to be explained which is probably connected with the rest. Be so kind as to inform me who gave you that valuable ring on your finger? I certainly never saw it there or in your possession before."

The girl was silent.

"Eunice Lisle, will you answer me? I insist on your replying! Still no answer. Must I again say that your whole future depends on your explaining that most suspicious circumstance? Will you tell me who gave you that ring?"

"I cannot, madam; my word is pledged to the contrary."

"You distinctly refuse?"

"I do, madam; I cannot break my word."

"Then I shall at once withdraw from you my protection and promised care for your future. I shall send you back to your mother as unworthy of all that I had hoped and intended to accomplish for you. It is more than I am called upon to do, even to make such arrangements as that for you; but as I foolishly charged myself with you I shall not leave you utterly friendless and destitute."

"Excuse me, madam, I cannot return. My mother had long desired to place me out in the world ere her own health utterly failed, though I did not know it till you proposed to carry out that wish, and I shall not disappoint her by again becoming a charge and burden on her. Lady Talbot, I am innocent—innocent as yourself in heart and deed," she added, earnestly, "but I will not even consent to remain where such cruel suspicion can be entertained of me. I can work, Lady Talbot, and I will, but never will I return to my mother in unmerited disgrace; or remain here if you can believe such cruel calumnies of me."

There was such a true, clear light of indignation in her earnest, unflinching eyes, and such a burning flush on her cheeks, that for a few moments Lady Talbot repented her harshness.

"Child," she said, more gently, "you are very young to be thus hardened in wrong, and I would fain believe it only indiscretion on your part rather than deeper crime; but explain to me the mystery of that ring, and I will try—yes, I will try, to forgive and to ignore the rest."

"Alas! I cannot. I have promised," said the girl. The hardness returned to Lady Talbot's features. She said:

"Perhaps I might have been led into foolish credulity of one young, and—alas! for herself—beautiful. If this is your final resolve, Eunice, I have but one alternative—to restore you to your mother. I at least shall then have no cause for self-reproach. Do you understand me?" she added as Eunice stood, with a calm, half-absent air before her.

"Perfectly, madam. You will do what you believe to be your duty, and I shall do mine. I will not return to my mother."

"Headstrong girl!" said the lady, contemptuously. "As if you could have a choice in the matter. I am, unhappily, your guardian for a time, and as such I have full power to act for you. To-morrow Andrew will escort you to your home, and he will have strict orders not to lose sight of you till he has placed you under your mother's care. I presume you have not accepted money with that valuable jewel?"

"Never!" cried the girl, impetuously, with such a ring of indignant denial that Lady Talbot could not doubt its truth.

"It is well. Now leave me; I have been already far too much agitated for safety to my health, and it is very probable I shall suffer severely for my absurd folly. Go, Eunice, and I trust you may learn to repent these fatal errors which have cost you a happy and prosperous home."

But the girl did not obey. She stepped forward with a quiet grace that might have befitted a queen, and, kneeling down by Lady Talbot's couch, pressed her lips on the thin white hand ere the invalid could resist the caress.

"Dear lady, may Heaven bless and reward you for your kindness, and forgive you for the injustice you are doing to the friendless orphan. Whatever may be the end, I pray that my innocence may yet be proved that you may feel your goodness has not been in vain."

And ere Lady Talbot could reply she had sprung up from her kneeling attitude and was gone.

There was an uncomfortable feeling in the lady's mind after the fair young form had disappeared, a doubt, a suspicion that such simplicity could not be the effect of the most finished art. Was it possible that she was mistaken?—that the lovely orphan was belied? But the ring! That was sufficient proof; and Lady Talbot sank back on her pillow panic-struck at the art which could simulate innocence in one so young.

"She shall go to-morrow," she ejaculated, languidly, "she shall go to-morrow; I will dismiss the whole irritating subject from my mind, and never give way to such idiotic romance again. But who could have believed such depravity in one so young, and to all appearance so innocent?"

Meanwhile Eunice walked with feverish haste to her own room, and sat down to calm her thoughts and arrange her plans. Yet what could avail thought when she had but one engrossing, intense desire, without any purpose or idea as to its carrying out? She would go—yes, go somewhere—anywhere to escape the dreaded return to the home from which she had instinctively felt herself to be exiled, and where the shameful libel on her fair fame would follow her with yet more condemning and fatal power than in a strange land.

There was little time to lose. What could she do? She had, as she had told Lady Talbot, no money save indeed a small sum, the savings of her childhood, small gifts from the good priest who had directed her ardent studies, and from a few others who were attracted by her beauty in early years, when passing through her lovely province.

She drew it from the little purse she had kept it in for years, and counted out the coins.

The whole amount was not more than two pounds in English money, and with that the poor girl determined to go forth into the world alone and friendless, trusting only to Heaven and her own innocence.

She had a tolerable idea that the journey to England, where she resolved to seek shelter and safety from pursuit, was easy enough if she could but get to Ostend; though how much money would be required to accomplish it she had not the slightest notion.

"But I can walk," she thought, "I can walk, and perhaps I may find some means of earning money by the way. In any case I shall be free and safe from calumny and reproach, or from danger to him, my noble, generous, suffering Godfrey."

The very thought of him who had so entirely won her young, enthusiastic heart sufficed to give artificial strength to her exhausted spirits, and she began with a feverish anxiety to complete every arrangement for her flight.

The clothes provided for her by Lady Talbot she collected and placed in a large trunk, in which she left the key; but her own simple attire she packed in a small valise, portable enough for her to carry; this she carefully concealed behind the curtain, lest it might lead to suspicions as to her plan.

Having thus finished her simple arrangements, she sat down to drag through with what patience she could the remainder of that weary day, which was broken only by the entrance of the austere waiting-woman to bring in her dinner, and again some two hours later with a small tray of coffee, roll and butter.

"You had better go to bed early," said Rainforth, "you will have to get up early in the morning. Andrew means to start soon after daybreak, and, to be sure, young women that don't mind sitting up all night can't complain of anything. My lady says you can take your clothes—she does not want to be reminded of all your ingratitude, and Andrew will pay for you, so you don't want any money."

Eunice calmly bowed. She was too proud for altercation or defence, and Rainforth stalked indignantly from the room.

The girl tried to eat the refreshment provided for her, feeling how useful it was to recruit in every way her strength; but the food choked her as she tried to swallow it, and the feverish stimulus of excitement for the time removed all sense of hunger.

Midnight came, and every one in the house seemed still and sleeping, ere Eunice dared to leave her room, wrapped in a large plaid which had been her companion in many a watch, and rambled in her early days, and a disguising veil tied round her hat.

She listened for a few seconds—all was still. She stole forward down the stone staircase, at the foot of which were Godfrey Mordant's apartments, and where her chief danger of discovery from his attendant must lie.

Yet, though she knew that the sole person still up in the house would probably be found in that sick-room, she could not resist the temptation to linger for an instant, to catch perhaps one sound of his familiar voice for the last time in her life.

The door was partly ajar. She peeped in and perceived the servant, who was sitting up with him, sleeping, open mouthed and snoring, in a distant chair, while the invalid was lying apparently enjoying an equally sound if quieter slumber on his pillow. Eunice gently pushed open the door and glided to the couch, took one last, lingering look of the now placid, noble features, then, with a pardonable impulse, touched his forehead lightly with her lips as her mute farewell, and passed swiftly from the room like a noiseless spirit.

In a few moments more she had gained the door of the house, whose simple fastenings were easily removed without waking the porter, who slept on the ground floor, and, closing it softly behind her, found herself, for the first time in her life, alone in the cold midnight air, without protector or guide in her unknown path.

She had but one landmark, a huge cross that served as a guide-post at the junction of four roads, one of which led to Ostend, and another to the gay city of Brussels, which she had more than once visited with Lady Talbot during her residence there, and whence the numerous masters whom that kind but weak-minded protectress had engaged for her instruction came.

Eunice could discern its figure in the pale moonlight that at once reassured and alarmed her by its revealing beams, and on she hurried with the step of

a gazelle flying from its pursuers, till she found herself fairly in the Ostend road, some hour or so after quitting her late home. Then she paused for a moment to take breath and slacken the rapidity of her pace, now that the absence of pursuit made her feel herself in comparative safety for the hour.

But the very respite from immediate alarm gave her leisure to feel the other terrors of her position. She was alone in that lone road, with darkness rapidly closing in over the friendly moon, with no possible help or shelter whatever might befall her, and with but the negative security of the very solitude that chilled her.

"This will never do," she thought, bracing up her trembling limbs for farther effort. "I must not give way so early, when on the very threshold of my attempt. If I can but once get to Ostend I shall be safe. I must try! I must try!" she kept repeating as she went wearily on. "I must keep on to the end whatever it costs me."

Bravely the poor, wearied limbs obeyed the high spirit and toiled slowly, more slowly on their weary way, but at length it would bear no more. Her head swam, a deadly faintness seized her, and, with a low cry of despair, she sank insensible on the ground. The fatigue and excitement of the last few weeks had so completely shattered her powers that the young but fragile frame succumbed to the mental and bodily strain, and Eunice's proud spirit gave way under its pressure.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

CHEAP BATTERY.—A battery of ample power for the purposes of most amateur electro-metallurgists may be made very cheaply. Take a gallon stone jar, and place in it a sheet of zinc, bent to fit it; within the zinc place a clean, unglazed flower-pot, with the hole at the bottom carefully corked and waxed over. Put a saturated solution of sulphate of copper (blue vitriol) inside the flower-pot, and a strong solution of common salt outside the flower-pot, in the jar. Put a piece of sheet lead in the sulphate of copper solution, and tie soft copper wire through the lead and through the zinc. Electro-plating performed with this battery will be, if ordinary care be used, quite satisfactory.

PASSIVITY OF IRON AND ELECTROLYSIS.—L. Schonn states that when a piece of iron is tightly fastened to a piece of charcoal, care being taken to make the contact between the charcoal and well polished iron as perfect as possible, and also to immerse both these substances simultaneously into nitric acid, the iron is not dissolved; but as soon as either the metal or the charcoal is touched, under the surface of the acid, with a strongly electro-positive metal (for instance, zinc) the iron becomes at once active again, and is dissolved in the acid with a copious evolution of gas. When some very dilute hydrochloric acid, so weak that it hardly acts upon zinc, is poured into a platinum basin, and a piece of zinc placed in that liquid in metallic contact with the platinum, a copious evolution of hydrogen takes place at once, precisely on the spot where the zinc, platinum, and acid are in contact. If, instead of the very weak acid, an aqueous solution of corrosive sublimate be taken, and the experiment repeated, metallic mercury is separated at the point of contact between the zinc, platinum, and the solution. The author finally states that, from a series of experiments made by him, he has found that all desired electro-chemical actions can be called forth at pleasure by simply placing either two different metals, or charcoal and metals, in contact with a fluid.

TESTING FOR GOLD WITH IODINE AND BROMINE.—Mr. W. Skey has given a method for detecting small quantities of gold by the use of iodine and bromine. Two grammes of roasted quartz sand, which contained two ounces of gold to the ton, was shaken up with an equal volume of a tincture of iodine, and, after the sand had settled to the bottom, and the liquid above was clear, a piece of Swedish filter-paper was immersed in it, and afterwards burned. The ash was not white, but purple, and the colouring matter was quickly extracted by bromine. One gramme of the same gold-bearing quartz was taken and thoroughly mixed with other rock, so that the gold did not exceed 2 dwts. per ton, and left for two hours with constant stirring in contact with the iodine tincture. A strip of filter-paper was then immersed five times in the liquid and tried each time, then burned and treated with bromine as before, when traces of gold were made evident. Hematite ore was mixed with gold quartz in such proportions that the gold did not exceed 0.5 dwts. to the ton, yet it was easily detected in this way. By the amalgamation method it is scarcely possible to detect gold, even when 100 grammes are put in to test, where the amount does not exceed 2 dwts. to the ton. Mr. Skey's process, being easy of

execution, offers many advantages over the old way of testing for gold.

SOMETHING WRONG WITH JUPITER.

Mr. PROCTOR, in the course of some observations upon Jupiter, says:

"During the last two years the planet Jupiter has presented an extraordinary appearance. The great equatorial belt, which is usually white, has been sometimes ruddy, sometimes orange, then coppery, ochreous, greenish-yellow, and, in fact, has passed through a number of hues, mostly tints of red and yellow; but has at no time, so far as observation has shown, exhibited what may be called its normal tint. Then, again, this belt, and the two belts on either side of it, have changed very rapidly in form; great dark projections have been flung (I speak always of appearances) into the great equatorial belt, which has thus seemed at times to be divided into a number of ovals. The whole aspect of the planet has suggested the idea that mighty processes are at work, tending to modify, in a most remarkable manner, the condition of the planet's atmospheric envelope.

"Now, it certainly is a remarkable circumstance that at the very time when Jupiter has been thus disturbed, the solar atmospheric envelope has also been subject to an exceptional degree of disturbance. As most of my readers know, the face of the sun has been marked by many spots during the last twenty or thirty months; some of these spots have been of enormous magnitude, even so large as to be clearly visible to the naked eye, and the spots have been of such a nature, so long lasting, and so variable in figure, as to imply the action of long-continued processes of disturbance acting with extraordinary violence.

"It may seem at first that the very circumstances of the case should prevent us from tracing any connection whatever between the solar disturbances and that which seems to be taking place in the atmospheric envelope of Jupiter. Two orbs separated, as the sun and Jupiter are, by an interval of about four hundred and fifty millions of miles, cannot be simultaneously affected, it would seem, by any disturbing forces. Nay, more: it seems so reasonable to infer that both in the case of Jupiter and of the sun the forces at work to produce change lie far beneath the atmospheric envelope of either planet, so that the idea appears at once disposed of that these forces can operate simultaneously except by mere coincidence."

NEW PROCESS OF ENGRAVING FROM PHOTOGRAPHS.

The following is a singular and altogether novel method of obtaining engraved surfaces from photographs. It is based on a discovery by Mr. B. C. Tilghman, of Philadelphia, of a new method of cutting, grinding, and engraving metal, stone, glass, and similar hard substances. Mr. Coleman Sellers, in describing the process, says:

"A jet of quartz sand thrown against a block of solid corundum will bore a hole through it 1½ in. in diameter, 1½ in. deep, in twenty-five minutes, and this with a velocity obtainable, by the use of steam as the propelling power, at a pressure of 300 lb. per square inch—a remarkable result, when we consider that corundum is next to and but inferior to the diamond in hardness."

Glass can be ground or depolished in this way more easily than by any other method, and by covering parts of the glass surface by a stencil or pattern of any tough or elastic material, such as paper, lace, caoutchouc, or oil paint, designs of any kind may be engraved.

"There is a kind of coloured glass made by having a thin stratum of coloured glass melted or 'flushed' on one side of an ordinary sheet of clear glass. If a stencil of sufficient toughness is placed on the coloured side, and exposed to the sand blast, the pattern can be cut through the coloured stratum in from about four to twenty minutes, according to its thickness.

"If a current of air of less velocity is used—say about one inch of water—very delicate materials, such as the green leaves of the fern, will resist a stream of fine sand long enough to allow their outlines to be engraved on glass. By graduating the time of exposure with sufficient nicety, so as to allow the thin parts of the leaves to be partly cut through by the sand, while the thicker central ribs and their branches still resist, the effect of a shaded engraving may be produced.

"The grinding of such a hard substance as glass by an agent which is resisted by so fragile a material as a green leaf seems at first rather singular. The probable explanation is, that each grain of sand which strikes with its sharp angle on the glass pulverises an infinitesimal portion, which is blown away as dust, while the grains which strike the leaf rebound from its soft, elastic surface.

"The film of bichromatised gelatine, used as a photographic negative, may be sufficiently thick to allow a picture to be engraved on glass by fine sand driven by a gentle blast of air."



[THE ARRIVAL AT BROOKOVER.]

CLARE ORMOND.

CHAPTER XIII.

As Doctor Brooke and his son approached the house, a tall, slender woman of twenty-eight, with an angular figure, and a quantity of unmanageable-looking hair, arose from the low rocking-chair on which she had been seated, and came forward with something like animation in her light blue eyes.

"Oh, papa, I have something to tell you that I know will delight you. Who do you think has come to visit Mrs. Simpson? Some one you will be charmed to meet again."

"But, my dear, from that vague description how can I guess? There are so many old friends I should be glad to meet once more before this earthly pilgrimage ends, and Mrs. Simpson has so many visitors in the summer."

"But one—one above all was our delight, when she shone upon us as the incarnation of genius."

"What! not—not Aspasia?" cried Walter, before his father could speak, but there was very little variation in the tone of his voice.

The saturnine face of the doctor lighted up.

"Is it—is it really Mrs. Harte? It will indeed be a great pleasure to me to meet a lady who combines in herself so many attractions."

"Yes, papa, it is Aspasia Harte, and she has been here to-day. I invited her to a *soirée* next week, and she accepted on the condition that you and Walter should call to see her before that time."

Doctor Brooke's face became less radiant.

"I seldom call on ladies, as you know, but Walter will, of course, pay his respects to her without delay."

Walter shrugged his shoulders, and made a light grimace; but before he could reply Judith said:

"Indeed, papa, Aspasia will expect that courtesy from you too. She knows you were at Mrs. Adair's to-day."

"That is very different. Mrs. Adair is one of the oldest friends I have in the world, and your fascinating friend must be satisfied with the homage of my son. I am no longer 'a squire of dames.'"

"I will take on myself all the courtesy business," said Walter, rather brusquely; "so you may hold yourself absolved from that bore."

"Walter!"

Both voices simultaneously pronounced his name in accents of astonishment and rebuke, and, after an expressive pause, Judith said, in mocking tones:

"I thought you were devoted to Aspasia Harte—that you looked on her as something almost superhuman."

"Well, I admit that I was humbugged by her, for

she is an awful humbug. That poetry she declaimed as her own I found afterwards in an old magazine at Mrs. Adair's that was published thirty years ago. Claudia Coyle brought it to my notice, for you know she and the fair Aspasia did not consort."

"Of course not; one is a schemer, and the other is 'open as day to melting charity.' I am not an admirer of Miss Coyle, you know."

"Nor am I particularly, since I have seen her rival; there is a girl after your own heart, Judith, full of life, poetry, and feeling. Miss Ormond is indeed a *rara avis*."

"Yes, I know; every new goose is a swan with you. Not that I mean to say that Miss Ormond is a goose, though somebody else I could name might merit that name."

"Thank you. I don't think the simile holds good; for those feathered bipeds are not like me, 'to one thing constant never.' I had Aspasia on the brain last year; this time I am destined to be in as bad a way about our charming young neighbour."

Judith tossed her head, and her hair fell down in a shower around her plain, but not unattractive face. She knew she was not handsome, and cared very little about the fact; for she had good sense enough to know that cleverness and money could make amends for that deficiency. One peculiarity about her hair was that it was always falling down, and she whisked it up in so rapid a manner that the ends were always sticking out, as if resentful of and determined to evade the confinement of the comb.

While this sparring went on between herself and her brother Doctor Brooke stalked on to the house, thinking of the pretty widow whose advent had been announced.

When he was out of hearing Walter asked:

"Do you know what has brought Aspasia back to this neighbourhood? Like a hawk, she flies straight to her quarry, and the *pater* is the prey she is after now. How could you be so absurd as to rejoice in her advent?"

"Nonsense! it is you she admires, and *pater* is old enough to be her father."

"That does not signify; she is after him, I tell you, and she'll take him if she can get him."

"She may, if she can drag his heart out of the marble mausoleum in which our mother lies. He is quite safe from her flatteries and cajoleries. I see through Aspasia as plainly as you do, but she is great fun to me; and, besides, I think she has some good in her, with all her pretension."

"Do you know, Judith, that I have doubts about those pretty stories she read to us with so much pathos, and declared to be her own composition?"

"I cannot agree with you there, for she is certainly a woman of genius, though she may not write

poetry. If the idol is dethroned, pray don't try to trample it in the dust, Walter. That is hardly fair."

"I won't, unless she comes it too strong over the *pater*. I shan't submit to have him bamboozled by a pretty woman after he has passed the age of discretion. The old man bores me about marrying, but I think he is sound in mind for all that. If he thinks a matrimonial yoke good for me, why shan't a bewitching widow put in his head that it will be equally good for him?"

"Walter, how can you even hint such a thing, when you know that mamma's bust is always kept on his writing-table. You know with what solemnity he often repeats to us the counsel he believes he receives from her."

"He reads controversial books, and addles his brains, that is all. He is sensible enough on every other subject except that, and marrying me off. I'll give him *carte blanche* for the first, though, if he will let me alone about the last."

"You are always falling in love; then why not marry?"

"Why? Did you never go through a garden of beautiful roses, culling each one you thought perfection, then casting it away as something more attractive caught your fancy? That is just my case about women. Each, in her turn, is the most charming of her sex till another comes on the carpet. It is my failing; but I am going to try to fix my heart on this new charmer, and be constant to her. I have promised to make love to her in earnest, and I am going to try it."

"It is Miss Ormond, of course, who is to fix your wandering fancies. I think old Goody might have asked me to be of your party to-day."

"Think of speaking of that aristocratic old dame as Goody! You would be banished for ever from the paradise of Rivendale if Mrs. Adair even suspected such lack of respect. Claudia doesn't particularly like you, you know, and she holds her own there yet."

Judith made an expressive grimace.

"For the present we will let Miss Coyle pass. Was my father really so much taken with the new favourite that he urged you to pay your court to her?"

"He insists that I can marry her, and, if I can, I must. A fine old autocrat, isn't he, to dispose of me in so summary a manner?"

"What's the value of an autocrat who doesn't enforce his decrees? To the end, you will be fickle as a butterfly, and Miss Ormond will enchain you no longer than another fair one comes along to claim your allegiance. There is the bell for supper, and *pater* doesn't like to be kept waiting."

The two walked the length of the piazza, and at

the farthest end passed through a door opening into a large square room panelled with oak, but well lighted by four large windows, opening on one side towards the river, and on the other upon a large, well-kept flower-garden.

The furniture was plain and old-fashioned, and the Brussels carpet upon the floor was so worn and faded that nearly all the bright colouring had disappeared. But the sideboard was covered with silver ware, kept with the extreme care of a model housewife.

The room, with all its belongings, had an antique look, and the old doctor, with his thin, strongly marked face and silvery hair, harmonised with his surroundings. He was one of those men who care very little for outward show, though his establishment was conducted on the most liberal scale, and all dependent upon him had every necessary comfort.

Doctor Brooke hated change. The things he had become accustomed to he preferred to never and more fashionable articles, and his children loved and respected him so much that they sacrificed their own wishes sooner than cause him the slightest annoyance.

The supper table was very neatly spread, the food deliciously prepared, and, after asking a blessing, the three seated themselves and partook of it, talking cheerfully, and waited on by a neatly dressed servant.

Towards the close of the meal Judith asked:

"Whom shall we invite to the coffee, papa? Aspasia, I think, would like to make a display. She tells me she has some new pieces to read that have not appeared in print."

"Ah-h! I only hope that is true," muttered Walter.

Judith gave him an indignant glance, and Doctor Brooke slowly said:

"Then we must have an appreciative audience. Ask such people as care for displays of that kind, and, if possible, exclude those gipping girls who made themselves so absurd at the last one."

"But that is impossible, papa, for two of them are the Miss Simpsons; and as Mrs. Harle is visiting there we cannot exclude the young ladies."

"True enough; but girls of fifteen and sixteen are, as a rule, great nuisances, unless they have been extremely well brought up. Mrs. Simpson allows her young people too much latitude. It was not so in my day."

"I suppose not, papa, but things have changed since then. Shall I ask the family from Riverdale?"

"Of course. I wish you to pay particular attention to Miss Ormond. She is a young girl, too, but a quiet, ladylike person, with much cultivation. She will appreciate our fair authors."

"Very well, sir; I will go over to-morrow, and ask them for next Thursday week. I hope I shall like this young lady better than Miss Coyle."

"Of course you will, for she is a person easily understood. I have views concerning Miss Ormond, which will take shape after I have consulted my sainted oracle."

Judith slightly elevated her eyebrows, and exchanged a significant glance with her brother as they arose from the table.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MISS BROOKE duly made her call, and the invitation was accepted by the three younger people, though Mrs. Adair and Mr. Clifford declined. The old lady rarely left home, and such entertainments were not to Mr. Clifford's taste.

Judith decided in her own mind that she should like Clara Ormond on a farther acquaintance, and she told her brother he would be very difficult to please if this attractive girl did not win him to love her at once and for ever.

During this call Clara had flirted with Walter, quite unconscious that a person of his stamp could have any serious intentions with regard to herself. With the giddiness of her age she thought it very good fun to have so sentimental an adorer, who, amid his finest speeches, was evidently thinking more of the effect he produced than of the lady to whom they were addressed.

The evil use to which her thoughtlessness was to be put could never have suggested itself to a candid, confiding nature like hers, and Clara made herself merry over the compliments of Walter Brooke when she and Claudia were left together after the departure of their visitors, the latter all the time speculating in her own mind as to the possibility of entangling Clara with her new admirer till she would be justified in asserting to Mrs. Adair that her darling project of bringing about a union between Jasper and her new protégée had little prospect of success.

Then Mrs. Adair would show how cold, how hard she could be, and in her despair the poor girl would turn to her love potion as the only means of bringing back the old feeling of regard her aunt had evidently conceived for her.

That she would succeed Claudia had no doubt, for Clara Ormond, although sweet and loveable, was by

no means a pattern young lady. She had great fondness for admiration, love of amusement, and a degree of thoughtless confidence in others, which peculiarly fitted her to be ensnared by a more crafty person.

To all outward appearance Claudia was the kindest and most considerate of friends, and, in spite of all Clara had been told, she found it difficult to believe her false and scheming.

In the course of the next ten days Mrs. Adair gave two large dinner parties, at which her niece was presented to her guests, and great was the satisfaction of the old lady at the almost unanimous verdict that her future heiress was charming, and well fitted to fill the position to which she had elevated her.

Invitations were accepted in return, and a bary of gay young people made the neighbourhood delightful to the new debutante. As the recognised heiress to one of the best estates in the country, and the representative of an old and highly respected family, Clara found herself an object of attention and interest wherever she appeared.

This life, apparently so free from care, so brilliant on the surface, possessed great charms for her, and she was just at the age to take "all the goods the gods provide," without thinking of or caring for the serpent whose trail, according to the poet, is over them all.

Always charmingly dressed, for her aunt required special attention to her toilette, admired, sought after, flattered even more than she cared to be, Clara had as utterly lost the episode of John Spiera from her thoughts as if such a person had never existed. That he would not dare to seek her here she was well aware, and she cast all thought of him away as something too disagreeable to be remembered.

How would she have shrunk and trembled if she had known that his influence was constantly around her—that every action of her life only tended to place her more completely in his power!

She had written long letters to her parents, describing her new-found relative and the lovely home in which she was made so much of; and the answers came, bringing cheerful accounts of affairs at Ormondia. But the intelligence which gave Clara the most satisfaction was that John Spiera had, his father stated, gone away on another long voyage.

It was true enough that he had left the town, but not for South America, as was supposed. He was concealed not many miles from Riverdale, and at night Claudia often met him in the grounds, though she was careful to avoid the side of the house from which the windows of Clara's apartment opened.

He was very impatient at the delay in carrying out their plans, though he knew that time must be allowed to bring Clara into the snare prepared for her. Claudia assured him that all was going on as well as possible for their interests; that their young victim had a serious flirtation on her hands with Walter Brooke, while at the same time she and Jasper seemed unable to withstand the mutual attraction that drew them together. That, too, should be made to play into their hands when the right time came; and the two revelled in the thought that by the time autumn began to put on its livery the fate of the unfortunate girl would be at their mercy.

Thrown together every day, it was quite true that Jasper and Clara had both found out that they cared more for each other's society than for that of any one else.

As Mr. Clifford's paternal manner to her had not changed, she had decided that it was not the elder man her aunt wished her to marry, and all her confidence in Mr. Clifford returned when she saw how unconscious he was of the dread that had crept into her own mind.

Clara's heart leaped at the thought that, if not the father, it must be the son who was destined by Mrs. Adair for her future husband, and, impressed with this belief, she used such innocent coquetry as her intuition told her would be most irresistible to the man she wished to captivate.

She succeeded better than she believed, for Jasper, much in love with her as he speedily became, would not betray his passion, lest it might injure her interests with her aunt. He knew himself to be out of favour, yet he could not help thinking Mrs. Adair's course very singular, for she placed Clara under his protection whenever she went from home, and always gave him the injunction to trust her with no one else.

If she had not hitherto proved herself capricious and difficult to understand, Jasper would have admitted the delicious thought that his aunt meant to give himself and Clara opportunities for falling in love with each other; but he feared to act on this supposition, lest it might prove the ruin of the girl he loved. He thought he kept his secret well, but the keen eyes of Claudia Coyle were upon him, and she understood the symptoms too well to be deceived.

Affairs were in this condition when the evening of the *soirée* at Doctor Brooke's arrived.

Walter had been constant in his devotions to the new object of attraction, and to pique Jasper Clara had unconsciously given him a degree of encouragement which led lookers-on to believe that young Brooke was to prove the successful candidate for the favour of the fair heiress.

The evening was bright and balmy; the flaming hues of sunset were reflected in the placid stream as the boat containing Jasper and the two girls was rowed by two young men in formal linen costumes trimmed with blue towards the landing-place.

Several other barges with gay-coloured awnings were already under the shelter of the boat-house, and Clara greeted them with a smile.

"There is going to be quite a party. I am glad of that. Perhaps the doctor will let us dance, after the literary part of the entertainment is over."

"My dear," said Claudia, "Doctor Brooke would think the very idea of coming to an end of any one attempted seduction in his house. Everything is staid, solemn, and proper, and I want you to be on your good behaviour. He would expect the spiritual presence of his daughter while she is in the midst of the revellers if they attempted to step upon his floors to the sound of music."

"Indeed I believe the doctor would enjoy it, for I think he is one of the most old-fashioned men I ever saw, and he likes to see young people happy. Doctor Brooke seems a sensible man," said Clara, "and it is difficult to believe that he has imagination enough to become the victim of such an illusion as you have mentioned. What do you think, Mr. Clifford?"

Jasper started at the sound of his name, and, in some embarrassment, said:

"Excuse me; but I was not attending to the conversation. Will you tell me again what it is that you require my opinion about?"

"Oh, I never repeat," she answered, with a saucy smile. "The phrase that drop from my lips are too precious to be wasted in so prodigal a manner."

Claudia laughed, and said:

"As my utterances are not so valuable, I will enlighten you, Jasper. Do you believe in the reality of Doctor Brooke's hallucination regarding his deceased wife?"

"I find it difficult to answer that question, but I am certain that the doctor states nothing that he does not believe strictly true. Like many men of his profession, he is inclined to materialism; as that belief was terrible to him after the loss of his wife, he sought for some tangible assurance that with death all does not end for us. He sought this everywhere, and finally wrote up his mind that he had discovered it in the writings of Swedenborg. He is consoled by the imaginary presence of his wife, but what reality the phantom shape may have I am not prepared to say."

"He makes himself very absurd about the wife who has been dead and gone more than twenty years," said Claudia, hardly. "I fancy that Mrs. Harle would not object to become Mrs. Brooke number two, from something I saw last summer when she was here; if she chooses, I think she will put to rout the bust, the shade, and the curtain picture. But I must not tell Clara about that; it would forestall half the amusement of the evening."

Before Clara could speak the boat came up to the landing, and the voice of Walter Brooke hailed them as he ran down the slope to meet them.

"Welcome at last," he cried out, "for I have been watching for you for the last hour. The evening is so beautiful though that I suppose one must excuse you for dawdling over the water as you have done."

"Has the queen of the revels arrived?" asked Clara as she gave him her hand and sprang on shore.

"Not the one crowned with bays, but the queen of love and beauty stands before me now," was the reply.

Clara laughed and blushed at this open flattery, but she was not displeased that Jasper should hear it. She permitted Brooke to draw her hand under his arm, and they walked towards the house chatting gaily together, while Claudia and Jasper followed them—she radiant and triumphant over the success she anticipated in her nefarious plans; he jealous, and angry at the air of possession with which Walter drew Clara to his side.

"She cannot be in earnest," he thought, "for she gives me such sweet looks and smiles as tempt me every day to say something to her that would be the ruin of both her and myself. Oh, if she were alone in the world! if others were not interested in her success with the old lady, I would speak all that is in my heart, and, if she consented, brave the world with her, winning competence for her sake. Ever since she came to Riverdale, and from the first hour of my meeting, it seemed to me that a portion of my very self had come to me, to remain beside me for ever. My aunt is cruel, or she would take me into

favour again, and give Clare to me as my wife, in place of this serpent woman gliding along beside me that she was lately so anxious for me to marry. Oh, life! oh, fate! thou hast terrible enigmas to solve."

When he had wrought himself up to this pitch, Claudia scornfully said:

"I am sorry that I am compelled to play the part of *Mademoiselle De Trop*, Jasper. I did not assume it willingly, yet you look as black as thunder-cloud because I am left to you."

"Pardon me, Claudia," he hastily replied. "My thoughts had wandered far from you; and if my face expressed annoyance, I assure you that it was not because you are my companion. It was—but excuse me, I will not bore you with the cause of my vexation."

"It would be a waste of words if you did, for I comprehend that jealousy is at the foundation of it. You have let the pretty face of *Clare Ormond* enthrall you, though you must know that for you there can be no hope in that quarter. Mrs. Adair has not and will not forgive you for making it necessary to look for an heiress among the kindred whose very existence she has hitherto ignored."

"My aunt should rather thank me, I think, for being the means of bringing to her side so true and warm-hearted a being as *Miss Ormond*, and for reminding her that natural ties are stronger than those formed with a stranger. Excuse me, *Miss Coyle*, but this is a subject that you and I cannot very well discuss."

"Why not?" asked Claudia, tranquilly. "We are on even ground. You angered Mrs. Adair by refusing me, and if I consented to accept you it was not because I cared for you in the least. You must know that other motives awayed me at that time."

"I think I understood your motives perfectly, *Miss Coyle*. I never gave you credit for anything beyond self-interest."

Claudia laughed bitterly. "What other motive should sway a young and attractive woman who has luxurious tastes and great ambition to become a leader in society? You disappointed my aspirations, *Jasper Clifford*, and at the same time ruined your own future. That is some consolation to me, at least."

Jasper smiled. "I am young, strong, well educated, and hopeful; therefore my future is pretty safe in my own hands. I think the consolation of seeing me a failure will be denied to you, *Miss Coyle*."

"In one thing at least you will fail. *Clare Ormond* will never be your wife," was the taunting reply; and with this Partisan shaft she ascended the steps, and received and returned the greeting of *Miss Brooke* with that grace and sweetness which she could assume at pleasure.

Judith was very simply dressed in a light purple muslin, with a pink bow at her throat, and another in her rebellious hair, which, on this occasion, had been dressed by her maid, and looked much more tidy than usual.

She greeted the new arrivals cordially, and led the way to the drawing-room. This was a portion of the house which had been built half a century later than the oak-panelled dining-room; the furniture was also of a more modern era than that of the remainder of the house, though it was of much more antique fashion than anything to be found in the luxurious mansion of *Riverdale*.

There were some good pictures on the walls, and but one mirror, an old-fashioned mantel glass, divided into three portions by gilt mouldings, and the different reflections given by each portion, was a source of great amusement to two young, ruddy-faced girls, the daughters of Mrs. Simpson, who had been sent on in advance of their mother and her guest.

The central mirror gave a tolerable image of one standing before it; the one on the right hand broadened the face and figure to an absurd degree; while the left one lengthened the visages of *Miss Phoebe Simpson* and her sister till *Walter Brooke*, with his usual felicity at quotation, compared them to "linked sweetness long drawn out" as they stood before it with their arms wound around each other.

"Oh, dear, Mr. Brooke! you always find something nice to say," giggled Phoebe.

Then she turned with much effusion to welcome *Clare*.

In a recess on one side of the chimney hung a veiled picture, and as they passed it *Clare* asked her young companion:

"Why is that concealed from view? Is it a portrait?"

"Wait and see," replied Phoebe, with a burst of stifled laughter. "Oh my! it is such fun to come to these literary symposia, as that dear, solemn old doctor calls them, and to see him unveil his goddess."

About twenty persons were present, all known to *Clare*, and they now crowded around her and offered greetings, and made inquiries about Mrs. Adair,

while *Claudia*, with curling lip, stood on one side, bitterly thinking:

"The last time I was in this house all that homage was offered to me, because it was then whispered and believed that I would inherit *Riverdale*. Never mind, I can bide my time; and that pretty doll, who is now the lady paramount, has little cause to exult in her prospects. I begin to hate her, and I will compass her destruction as ruthlessly as *Cesar Borgia* crushed those who stood in his way."

At this juncture the tall form of *Doctor Brooke* entered, and, like a covey of bright-plumaged birds, the ladies gathered around him and chattered gaily, thanking him for the treat in store for them in hearing the fair *Aspasia* read her own productions.

"The least of reason, and the flow of soul," quoted *Walter*. "That is as original, I think, as anything we shall hear to-night; boy, *Miss Coyle*?"

"Very likely," replied *Claudia*, indifferently. "Literary pretenders are apt to poach on others' preserves."

Phoebe Simpson overheard her, and, with a giggle, said to her sister:

"I'll tell Mrs. Harle that. She takes me to task for laughing so much, and I shall like to take her down."

"Tiresome old thing!" replied the younger one; "all the fun we get out of her is in seeing her show off with that solemn old owl, who makes her believe she's a goddess."

"Don't speak so loud, *Kitty*," said *Walter Brooke*, "lest the parrot should retort by saying that to be an owl is better than to be a parrot."

"Oh, dear! I didn't mean that you should hear that."

"I daresay not. But we are quite, I think."

A slight bustle took place at the door, and two servants came in bearing a small table covered with a crimson cloth richly embroidered. They placed this in front of the fireplace, and presently returned with a wreath of laurel leaves ingeniously woven together, and a wax candle, and placed them upon it.

"The fane is ready," said the old doctor, in his solemn tone, and another burst of suppressed giggling from the two *Simpsons* caused him to look severely at them and say:

"If I were prepared I would give a brief lecture to fill up the time till the fair *Aspasia* arrives, and my theme would be—the manners of the rising generation."

With crimson faces, the two offenders shrank behind the other guests, but *Phoebe* consoled herself by whispering to her sister:

"He's a horrid old dunce, any way, and *Aspasia* will end by twisting him round her fingers, so if she don't."

A diversion was made in their favour by the arrival of a carriage, and *Doctor Brooke* went to the door to receive the honoured guest of the evening.

(To be continued.)

MABEL CARRINGTON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"*Lady Juliette's Secret*," "*Grand Court*," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XX.

But London saw another sight
When the drum beat at dead of night,
Commanding fires of death to light
The darkness of her scenery. Campbell.

MABEL clasped her hands. She uttered no word of reproach; she knew that reproaches would only be thrown away upon *Captain Friedrich Reutlinger*. For his part he admired her amazingly—not only her beauty, but also her courage, and her sweet, eloquent pleading for others. It was very painful to this handsome young German, who had lived only twenty-six years amid the turmoils of the world, that the beautiful English girl should go away and remember him as a stern and merciless tyrant. He was thankful that she did not attempt to renew the discussion, but he wished to show her kindness, if possible, in another way.

"I will send madame under safe escort to the station," said he; "if she will wait a short time a carriage shall be ordered."

Mabel bowed, but she did not speak.

"Madame will accept my escort?" inquired the young man.

She bowed her head in acquiescence. What could she do but accept? She was not in a hurry to be gone, however; a kind of lingering idea still possessed her that after all she would not leave *La Ronceville* without the ebony box.

Reutlinger approached the piano and opened it.

"Does madame play?" he asked.

"Yes, monsieur," said Mabel. "Surely monsieur also performs, your nation are so famous for their music."

Without further preliminary the Prussian soldier seated himself before the instrument. His hands

wandered over the keys, calling forth such sounds of beauty from the excellent piano that Mabel stood dumbfounded in great amazement. Another moment and *Reutlinger* was performing a brilliant fantasia. Had the Prussian captain chosen to come to England and to give concerts all London would have run mad after him and his performance. So judged Mabel while listening to his marvellous playing. For the time he seemed to forget that he was a stern soldier in enemy's quarters, engaged in pillaging a French château for the benefit of his country.

Mabel stepped quietly now from the room. *Reutlinger* never heard her. He did not see her, for the door faced his back. She listened to the thrilling cadences executed by his nimble fingers like one in a dream. All this while she was crossing the marble hall, now she approached the door of the room where the soldiers sat round the table. The ebony box stood where the captain had left it. She entered the room smiling.

"With your leave, messieurs," she said, "this box for *Monsieur le Capitaine Reutlinger*, who is performing in the other room on the piano."

No one stopped her or questioned her. Her artificial calmness and confidence imposed on them all. Slowly she walked away, listening to the wonderful fantasia which the captain played. There was no light in the hall, and the door was ajar. She went down the steps and stood still, the night sky overhead, and the box concealed under her cloak. Now she went quickly across the grass towards the shrubbery, where she knew there was a little gate which led down by a flight of steps into the high road. She reached these steps, she descended them, and presently stood in the high road. It seemed to her that her safety and her escape depended upon the length of time during which *Captain Reutlinger* should chance to remain entranced by his own formidable performance. She hastened along swiftly and more swiftly. Presently she heard steps behind her—steps heavy and hurrying. Surely it was the heavy tramping of a soldier that was in her rear. Horror of horrors! Could some one have been sent in pursuit? It was impossible to hurry at any great rate loaded with that heavy box. Not that the artistically chased gold of the ear-rings and bracelets and chains or the precious stones themselves weighed so heavily, while the eight hundred pounds, as we know, were all in franc notes, but the ebony of the box itself was weighty, and each jewel had a separate leathern case of its own. Thus Mabel found the casket cumbersome.

Meanwhile the tramping footsteps gained upon her. The man was not running, only walking at a steady, swinging pace. But a few more such strides must surely bring him up to her. There was a little thicket at the side of the road, and, acting upon impulse, Mabel rushed into it and crouched down under the thick herbage.

The moon came out from behind the thick black clouds, and the white, pure light streamed into the road. From her hiding-place Mabel could watch the passage of the soldier, if soldier he was. Another moment and a figure stood between her and the moonlight: It was that of a heavy Prussian dragoon in his dark uniform. He was bearded, and Mabel believed that he was *Carl*, the brutal-looking soldier whom she had first of all addressed. He paused in the road; he stared about him. He must have heard her light footsteps ahead of him, and have wondered at their sudden cessation. Finally he strode towards the copse where she was hiding. Now indeed her heart failed her for very fear. To escape and carry that box would be an impossibility; but it was just possible he would not find the box. He would be engaged in searching for her, and if he came up and discovered that she had it not he might possibly believe what she was prepared to tell him, namely, that she had consigned the treasure to the keeping of those who were powerful enough to protect it from the rapacious hands of a greedy soldiery.

"For have I not left it in the care of Heaven?" thought Mabel to herself.

She placed the box on the soft grass and drew over it a thick undergrowth of nettles and brambles, so that it would be completely hidden, unless anybody stumbled against it, or searched for it carefully with a lantern or by daylight. Then she rose to her feet and crept along the thicket, gathering her garments closely about her, so that she might make no rustling of the bushes.

All this was the work of a few seconds. It will be perceived that Mabel had no fear for her own safety; her whole thoughts were absorbed in the endeavour to preserve the jewels of *Madame de la Ronceville*, and when she heard the soldier tramping among the brambles in pursuit of her, instead of feeling terror she felt relief, as it was leading him away from the box which was all her thought.

She rushed out now into the open road, and ran

along quite swiftly. The German followed at his heavy, swinging pace. The white moonlight threw up her slender form into full relief. One minute's pursuit and the heavy hand of Carl was laid upon the shoulder of Mabel.

"You are in a hurry, pretty one," said he, in his hoarse German accent. "And Carl also, he was in a hurry when he discovered that you had fled. He made up his mind when he saw you standing in the hall at that great royal chateau—for it is royal in its splendour—he made up his mind that you should be his share of the spoil. Nay, he will make you his wife—why not? Carl is not a Prussian. He has his cottage and his vineyard and his orchard in the Black Forest. He can keep a wife. He has kept one; but she is dead. Now he would have another, and he has chosen her—that is you. *Ach, Himmel!* but you are pretty. Are you English or French or Spanish? What are you? But certainly you are an angel. I missed you. I was told you had taken the box to the captain and had gone. He was at his music, and when he gets to that he never leaves it until he drops to sleep. Then I sped along the road after you, I did. I thought I should find you."

Relief and terror struggled for mastery in the mind of Mabel; relief to find that Carl was not in pursuit of the box, then terror as regarded her own safety. His great rough arms were close around her, his hot breath was in her face; he had been drinking—nay, he was drunk. It seemed to her to be useless to expostulate with this monster, yet she struggled with him desperately.

At that moment it seemed almost as though an earthquake had shaken the ground whereon Mabel stood; there was a loud noise, an explosion, a red ball whizzed through the thicket to their right, then all was still. But Carl had loosened his hold of Mabel and had staggered into the road.

"A shell has burst somewhere," he said. "By to-morrow all St. Cloud will be shattered."

Mabel took the opportunity thus afforded of rushing away from Carl in the direction of the station. He was soon following her again, but this time with less steady footsteps. The shock of the explosion had perhaps acted in some way upon his nerves, already somewhat shaken by excess of drinking.

Poor Mabel continued to fly at a great pace, but the enormous fatigue she had undergone that day and that night was telling upon her. Panting and breathless, utterly worn and spent, she paused at length. Even had Carl been close to her she must have paused. As it was he was not in sight. Then she perceived a small white house standing in the centre of a square, well-fruited garden. The moonbeams shone brightly on this French cottage, with its closed Venetian shutters. Instantly Mabel opened the gate, rushed up to the house, and knocked at the door.

The night was very far advanced now, or rather the hours of the day had commenced, although the moonlight was yet bright in the September sky. Mabel was ashamed of waking up the good people of the house, yet she knocked long and loudly. Drunken Carl was not yet in sight. A window and shutters were opened, and a head was thrust out.

"*Qui va là?*" cried a voice.

It was the voice of a woman.

"Pardon, madame," replied Mabel, in her sweet, dulcet voice, tinged by its English accent. "I am a young girl flying from a Prussian soldier. Let me in, for Heaven's sake!"

"*Ma pauvre chère!*" cried the woman's voice. "But you shall enter at once, *mon enfant.*"

Lighter and more agile footsteps than could have belonged to the kindly dame of the hoarse voice began to descend the stairs. Another moment and the bolts were drawn back, Mabel had entered the house, and still drunken Carl had not appeared in sight. Mabel clasped her hands and began to utter expressions of thankfulness and apology. There was no light in the passage; but, having re-bolted the door, the young person who had admitted her soon procured one. Mabel then perceived that the little maisonette was prettily and neatly furnished. The young woman who had admitted her was perhaps about four-and-twenty years of age. She had dark eyes and hair and a pleasing smile. Even in her white wrapper and hastily donned purple japon there was a certain grace in her appearance and movements.

"*Entrez, mademoiselle,*" she said, opening the door of a neat little *salle-à-manger*. "I do not know how to accommodate you, for the beds are all occupied—my mother, my two brothers, myself, and the *bonne* are all at home. But I can bring you blankets, and if you could lie down on that couch—it is soft and wide—you might chance to sleep. But, first of all, will you take a glass of wine and some bread and cheese? They are all we have to offer you just now."

Mabel was so thirsty and fatigued that she did not refuse some wine and water, nor the offer of a blan-

ket. Finally she took off her hat and cloak, lay down on the sofa, and slept.

When she awoke the September sunlight was shining through the Venetian shutters. She must have slept far into the morning, she supposed, for she heard the sounds of voices, laughter, and the clattering of cups and plates in an adjoining apartment.

The room in which she was had a polished oak floor, chairs and couch of red damask, a handsome looking-glass over the chimney-piece, and a sideboard of solid oak with glass panels, through which one could perceive cups and plates and spoons of solid silver.

It is customary in some respectable French houses thus to display their plate. Evidently these people were persons of property, if not of position. There was a great air of comfort about the whole place.

Mabel rose up and walked across the room, and immediately the door of the *salon* opened and her acquaintance of the previous night appeared. She was charming in her morning robe of mauve-coloured print. Her face glowed with health and happiness, her dark hair was well burnished by brush and comb, and altogether the young French lady looked so fresh and neat that Mabel felt ashamed of her own dusty and worn appearance.

"I trust mademoiselle slept well," said the sprightly young woman, gaily. "Anyhow, I may conjecture that you would be glad to go to a room and refresh yourself with soap and water before joining us at breakfast."

Mabel thankfully accepted this offer. She was shown upstairs into a charming little bedroom, furnished in perfect French taste of the less costly sort. White muslin curtains lined with rose-colour, chairs and wardrobe of polished birch, handsome mirror over the mantelpiece, and pretty washing service of blue and white Sèvres.

All other toilette requisites were placed before Mabel. She washed herself, arranged her hair neatly, brushed from her dress all the dust of the day before, then descended, looking fresh, beautiful, and perfectly ladylike, to a room on the first floor, smaller than the one in which she had slept, where the family of her hostess were assembled around a well-spread breakfast-table.

Madame Capôte was a stout, fresh-coloured, jovial Frenchwoman of about fifty-five. She was the widow of a wealthy Paris *épicer*. The good grocer had now been dead some ten years, and madame had expended a portion of her property in the purchase of the pretty white house with its garden and orchard, where she now found her domicile.

Here she resided with her daughter, Estelle, a young widow, with a child of a twelvemonth old.

Madame Capôte also had two sons, one of whom was engaged in a commercial house at Marseilles, and another who had entered the merchant service. Both of these sons, Arthur and Robert, were at home on a visit to their mother. They were fine young men, with lively dark eyes and stalwart frames. Indeed, a more cheerful-looking family than that of the Capôtes can scarcely be imagined.

There were coffee and milk, white rolls and butter, sausages, omelettes, wine and fruit upon the table.

The family were laughing and talking merrily, as though the Prussian guns were not within two miles of them.

Mabel was at once pressed to take a seat and to partake of breakfast.

Some curiosity the Capôtes could not restrain. The French as a nation take a very lively interest in the affairs of strangers, and the Capôtes were no exception to the rule.

Mabel related to them as much of her story as she dared. She was governess in the family of La Roncerville; the Germans were now in occupation of the chateau; she had returned there to bring away a box which madame valued, but she had been pursued and molested by a rude Prussian soldier, and had only escaped from him through the bursting of a shell within a few yards of where they stood.

"Then where was the box?" asked Arthur Capôte, eagerly.

"They had refused to give it to me at the chateau," replied Mabel, who thought it as well to be cautious.

"Ah, the robbers!" cried Estelle Dubois, the widow, indignantly. "We shall have them quartered upon us immediately, *ma mère*," turning to her mother.

"*Soyez tranquille,*" responded Madame Capôte, calmly. "We will remain here, then they will not rob us. We are not obliged to give them anything very nice to eat and drink, you know. Bread and cheese, *vin ordinaire*, soup and boiled meat, and a little coffee—make them up beds on the floor; and then after a while, when the war is over, the government must repay us for all we have expended. I am not one of those to distress myself. I generally find the easiest way out of a difficulty."

Indeed, a very cheerful view did Madame Capôte contrive to take of the war and its consequences.

After breakfast Mabel began to think seriously of returning to the wood and searching for the precious box; but though she was most grateful to the Capôtes she did not dare to trust them yet with the secret regarding the jewel-case. They were a lively, talkative family, who might betray her unintentionally.

After breakfast she accompanied Estelle Dubois into the garden and orchard. Estelle was carrying her child. The morning was bright and sunny. Now and anon a dull, booming sound was borne on the air, but this lively Capôte family seemed so careless, so full of confidence and hope, that Mabel caught something of their spirit, and soon she found herself laughing and even laughing with the pleasant little French widow.

Then all of a sudden came a terrible noise like thunder, close to them, and the earth trembled. Crash upon crash followed—hideous, appalling, deafening. Another moment, and, turning towards the home of her mother, the pretty white maisonette, Estelle Dubois perceived it with all its front shattered in, and smoke and flames proceeding from the roof in volumes. Fort was answering fort, within dangerous distance of the Capôte house, and whether it had been destroyed by Prussian shell or French mitrailleuse neither Estelle nor Mabel could say.

Pale as death, with set teeth, and staring eyes, stood Estelle Dubois. Her boy, who was screaming with fear and excitement, she pressed convulsively to her heart, but she could find no words wherewith to express her anguish. Presently she rushed towards the smoking house, screaming out:

"My mother, my brothers, where are they?"

Mabel followed close upon her footsteps. She was no coward, as we know, and no selfish regard for her own safety withheld her from striving to be of service to those who had befriended her. Another shell might at any moment lay even the outer walls of the house level with the ground. But it was first of all her intention to seek the kindly mother of the family, her stalwart sons, and the poor little French *bonne*, within the shattered dwelling. At the very threshold a horrible sight awaited the young widow and the English girl. There lay the disfigured corpse of the kindly Madame Capôte. Heavy masonry had fallen upon her and crushed in her chest. Her face, distorted by the death agonies, was turned towards the autumn sky; portions of her dress were blown about by the wind, and carried among the flower-beds and fruit trees.

It astonished Mabel to see Estelle, the daughter, turn round and watch apathetically the gambols of the wind as it tossed about a jagged piece of bright blue rept cloth, which had formed part of the skirt of her mother's robe. She neither shrieked nor gesticulated, but seemed rather stupefied by the blow into a condition of mortal apathy. It was impossible for hands fragile as those of Mabel Carrington to remove the body of the hapless woman unassisted, for the masonry that rested upon the corpse was of great weight. But there was a sound of groaning from within the house, and Mabel, passing in, entered the room which had been the dining *salon* and her sleeping-chamber the night before. Every portion of the furniture was crushed into utter ruins; the mirrors were shattered; fire had struck the place where the plate was kept, and a portion of the silver articles had already melted under the fervent heat, but there were others which remained intact. It was from this room that the groans proceeded. Then it was that Mabel discovered the little French *bonne*, wedged in between the table and the planks of the floor, which last had been partially torn up. Her face was white, but perfectly conscious.

"My leg is broken, madame," said she, addressing Mabel.

Mabel went close to her, and found that it was not difficult to remove the table and the plank which had crushed the poor creature's leg. After that it was easy to lift her, and drag her out to the air, where Mabel laid her on the grass, under some trees. She looked about for Estelle, and was horrified to perceive the young widow seated on the ground, with an expression of apathy amounting to idiocy upon the face which had been so happy one half-hour ago.

The little boy had left off crying. He was crawling on the grass by the side of his mother, every now and then crowing when a beautiful butterfly flitted past him. Once more Mabel entered the house, this time to search for the two Capôtes. She found the dining-room was the only place she could enter. The ceiling and roof and upper floor had all been crushed down in one undistinguishable heap of ruins at the back portion of the house, and, with a sickening conviction that the two fine, manly brothers Capôte must by this time be shattered out of all semblance to humanity, she found her way again into the outer air.

All at once a sound was borne upon the summer morning air which had in itself nothing terrible or suggestive of desolation and death. It was the tramping of the feet of many horses.

Mabel rose to her feet and looked over the hedge. A troop of French cavalry was galloping over a field near by; there might have been eighty men in all. The scarlet facings of their uniforms glittered in the sunshine. They were led by a young officer who rode bare-headed and brandished a naked sword in the air. Mabel's heart rose high and then sank low again when she recognised Gustave de l'Orme—Gustave, faithless, sickle, and proud, who had won her love and cast it to the four winds. There was no mistaking the beautiful, dark, statuesque face, the form and attitude at once expressive of grace and strength. A sort of pride in him Mabel felt, although neither he nor his love belonged to her now. Then she heard a wild yelling, such cries as might emanate from the very bounds of war. There was a clattering of horses' feet in another direction. Sweeping down from a woody height at the left came a company of uhlands. Shots were fired from both sides; smoke filled the air. She could see nothing of men or horses for the space of two or three minutes; but when this vapour cleared away many a uhlan had been swept from his saddle—many a French soldier lay weltering in his gore.

Gustave de l'Orme still headed the attack. There came more shots, more clearing away, more riderless horses and fallen men, and still there rode Gustave—not unscathed, for his left arm hung down powerless at his side. He still waved his right one on high, and rushed forward, uttering a cry of defiance to his enemies and encouragement to his French soldiers. A few moments more and the uhlands were flying before the victorious French. It was one of those engagements which would be described as a slight skirmish between the outlying posts. Then the remains of the French regiment, still headed by Gustave, rode swiftly towards the Capote house. They had not noticed that it had become a heap of ruins.

It would be difficult to say which face looked the paler or the more agitated, which pair of dark eyes was filled with the wildest excitement, when those two young creatures, who had pledged their troth to each other only a few weeks back, met under these strange and awful circumstances. The bright, rich September morning, glowed around them, but the fragrant air was heavy with the sighs of death. Mabel leaned against a tree; Gustave bowed to her with a distant and chivalrous politeness.

"We meet under sad circumstances, mademoiselle," said he. "I came hither to solicit beds for the wounded, of whom some two dozen, Germans and French, lie helpless on yonder field; but I perceive that Prussian shell or French mitrailleuse has caused dreadful havoc here."

"There are three corpses," replied Mabel, "a little servant with a broken limb, and yonder lady seems to have lost her senses, under the shock of seeing her mother killed at the threshold of their home. Oh, how awful is war! What a fearful trade is the soldier's!"

"You have been preserved, mademoiselle," said Gustave. "Perhaps you will allow me to conduct you, yonder lady, and the child, to a place of safety." His tone was courteous, but cold in the extreme. Mabel felt it bitterly.

"Monsieur le Comte de l'Orme," said Mabel, "it is bitter to me to be under the slightest obligation to you of all men."

"Alas, mademoiselle, I can well understand that," said he, sorrowfully. "But at least suffer me to offer you the same protection and assistance that I would give to any other lady under the like circumstances."

Mabel's heart swelled with indignation. Her eyes flashed fire, which could not be extinguished even by the large, bright tears which filled them to overflowing.

"Nay, Comte de l'Orme," she said. "I could find it in my heart to prefer death rather than protection or assistance from you."

"Woman is a riddle difficult to read, mademoiselle," said he. "I must confess myself unable to comprehend the cause of your anger towards me."

"It is unnecessary, monsieur," replied Mabel, "that I should explain myself; if your own heart and your own conscience do not tell you, nay, do not accuse you bitterly, why then you have neither heart nor conscience."

"I am still quite unable to comprehend you, mademoiselle," said Gustave, laughingly.
(To be continued.)

THE total increase of inhabitants in the Isle of Man since the last census is stated to be 15,000. Not bad for man alone. With the assistance of woman's rights the number might have been doubled.

USES OF CAMELS' HAIR.—The hair is imported

in bales from Persia or directly from Russian ports, and is mostly used in the manufacture of pencils for drawing and painting. Camels' hair is longer than sheep's wool, and often as fine as silk. There are three colours, black, red, and gray, the darkest of which is considered the most valuable. It is said that the hair on a camel weighs about 10 pounds. In Bokhara the camel is watched while the fine hair on the belly is growing. This is cut off so carefully that not a fibre is lost, and when sufficient has been collected it is spun into a yarn unequalled for softness, then dyed in various bright colours, and used chiefly for shawls. The Arabs and Persians make of camels' hair of a less valuable kind stuffs for carpets, tents, and wearing apparel, and cloth is made of it in Persia.

THE TRAFFIC IN SPURIOUS AUTOGRAPHS.—While every trade in Paris has been almost annihilated during the war, that of spurious autographs seems, on the contrary, to have considerably increased, and a regular commerce is being carried on in "original" letters purporting to be in the handwriting of the Emperor Napoleon, or of the Empress Eugénie, or Prince Napoleon. These are distributed all over Germany, and eagerly bought up by collectors to serve as illustrations of French history previous to the war. A large bundle of these letters and documents, which had found their way to Brussels, has been entrusted for examination as to their authenticity to the Abbé Michon, the greatest connoisseur in handwriting now in existence. The abbé, who has but lately left London, was employed during his stay here in the comparative study of the character and motives of various historical celebrities from the specimens of their handwriting preserved in the British Museum.

THE DIAMOND MERCHANT.

CHAPTER LV.

WHEN Sir Edred entered the kitchen Anselm advanced towards him, saying:

"Oh, Sir Edred, had you trusted me in full I never should have put that saddle in jeopardy."

"But where is Rudolph Schwartz?" exclaimed Ulgiha, finding her speech at last. "You must have come up with him very soon—or did he throw away the saddle?"

"Do you imagine he did not know what was in it when he carried it off?" demanded Anselm, grinning.

"No—I am sure he knew that Sir Edred's genuine diamonds were in it."

"Do you think he would throw the saddle away un plundered? How is your hurt this morning, Sir Edred?"

"Well enough, at least, to permit me to give my hand to you, my honest fellow, as a pledge that hereafter I will not doubt you," replied Sir Edred, extending his hand to the guide.

"I swore to be faithful to you, Sir Edred, nor can I ever forget your noble kindness to me," said Anselm, pressing the diamond merchant's hand. "Is all safe with the saddle?—for I have not looked into it. As I found it so I have returned it, and much more speedily than I hoped."

"Doubtless the gems are all there——"

"Nay, please examine, then I will feel more easy in mind; for if there be a single one missing Ulgiha has it in mind to say I am the thief."

"Not now, Anselm, not now!" cried Ulgiha, abashed. "But let us be silent while Sir Edred examines."

"They are all here," said Sir Edred, after a time. "Not one is missing. I will keep them in this pouch for the present," he added as he placed the gems in a small leathern sack which he took from the wall. "The old saddle has so faithfully defended its trust that we may confide the same to it again at our leisure."

"Mother's hands are the best for that," said Ernest, "and mother is waiting for her breakfast."

"Then let me take it up," cried Ulgiha, now all life and glee. "But first tell me—where is Rudolph?"

"In a score of places," replied Anselm.

"Eh?"

"In two score of places," said Anselm.

"Oh! What?"

"In five score or more places!" roared the guide, laughing at the bewildered look on Ulgiha's face. "He is dead, and the wolves of the forest have picked his bones as you do the bones of a chicken when you are hungry, Ulgiha."

"Said I not the curse he spoke would overtake him?" said Sir Edred. "But not a hint of this to Lady Louise," he added, turning to Ulgiha.

But he saw that Ulgiha was incapable of action at that moment. Having heard the declaration of the guide, she shuddered, and sank upon a stool, faint and sick.

Time had been when this unfortunate woman be-

lieved she would have been boisterous in her joy over the death of Rudolph Schwartz; but her natural disposition had so fully returned to her that her soul contemplated the terrible fate of her late companion with speechless horror.

"I will take up the tray to mother," said Ernest, "and Anselm shall tell me all at some other time. I will only tell mother that Anselm has in some way recovered the diamonds, and that you, father, will tell her all about it when you come up."

"Right, my brave boy, and discreet as you are brave," said Sir Edred, kissing the boy's forehead, and adding, in his heart, "Oh, that you were in truth mine own son—son of some unknown!"

The story told by the guide was short. He had tracked Rudolph till he found his bones, with the old saddle lying near them, and had speedily returned with the prize.

Sir Edred and Ulgiha listened eagerly to the narrative of the guide, who concluded by saying:

"Now, Sir Edred, you have all your own again—your wife, your son, and your diamonds, and I trust I have made some amends for their betrayal into the hands of the Riders."

"Full amends, Anselm," replied Sir Edred, heartily, "and it is to you, also, that I am indebted for my escape from the fortress of your knives of the forest. I doubt not that the Barons of Zweibrücken and Karlwold would by this time have made an end of me, though I have some belief that when I saw Sir Fritz entering the underground passage he was on his way to befriend me in some manner. But a thousand times sooner would I trust in you than in him."

"You may trust me fully now, I hope, Sir Edred; and as soon as Lady Louise is able to encounter the fatigue of travel we will set out for Koridam."

"And thence for the Castle of Zurichbold," said Sir Edred, "as it is there my wife hopes to meet her father and mother, the Count and Countess of Karlenburg."

"And the countess is my mother, too," mentally exclaimed Ulgiha. "But never shall I dare to make myself known to her—no, no!—nor to my sister, the gentle and angelic Lady Louise. Oh, what better fate do I deserve than that which has befallen Rudolph?"

She hurried away, fearing her misery of soul might be seen by Sir Edred and Anselm, and be mistaken for grief at the end of Rudolph.

"Shall we set forth to-day, Anselm?" asked Sir Edred.

"Is Lady Louise able to travel, Sir Edred?"

"She says she is, and I fear the alarm in which she will be so long as she remains here may be more dangerous to her health than the fatigue of travelling in a litter."

So the matter was arranged, and soon after night had begun the party left the "Iron Hand" inn.

Before they departed Anselm dragged the body of the old smith into the clump of reeds and flags, saying, with a grim smile:

"The wolves will be out again to-night, and, having feasted so well last night, they will venture to approach the inn. They will find this old knave, but I doubt not they will find him a tougher morsel than they found Rudolph, especially as this fellow wears a coat of mail."

Ulgiha was for setting fire to the place in which she had lived so wickedly for so many years, but the prudent guide forbade, as he feared the blaze of so great a building of wood might be seen from a very great distance, and create an inquiry that might lead to their pursuit.

So the old inn, with its great hand sheathed in rusty tin and iron, ever thrust towards the ancient road, was left unharmed by Sir Edred and his party, though all would have gladly given the rambling old pile to devouring flame.

The scene of our story now changes to the Castle of Zurichbold, after a lapse of several days since our last visit.

Never for a moment doubting that the beautiful babe was her own daughter which she had found on her breast on regaining her reason, Princess Agnes, the wife of Prince Eustace of Zurichbold, had rapidly regained full health. And with health had been established a serenity and happiness of mind like that which was hers when her first-born was a babe, ere the treacherous Bethia robbed her of her beloved infant son.

Princess Agnes had no doubt that both Bethia, whom she had known only as Lena Riecht, and her lost babe were dead. No hope that the child lived had ever cheered her heart after the sudden and mysterious disappearance of the nurse and child, nine years before the opening of this story. A kind of apathetic despair had, soon after the loss, settled upon her soul, and as the health of the body, in a great degree, depends upon that of the mind, it was not strange that

no child capable of living more than a few hours had ever afterwards been born to her.

But now the possession of a handsome, robust, and charming babe, which she had not the slightest suspicion was not hers, acted upon the mental and bodily health of Princess Agnes like magic. She moved about her husband's palace like one inspired by a heavenly ecstasy. All the ardent and long-despairing yearnings of her affectionate nature were now fully gratified.

The babe of Lady Louise was idolised by the deceived princess. Of all in the great household of Zurichbold there were but four who knew of the deception—Ida le Clair, Esther Warmley, Sir David Orleton, and Prince Eustace.

Besides these four, there were but three persons in all the world who knew that a new-born babe had been sold and bought at the "Iron Hand" inn of the Giant Forest. These three were Banita, her husband the woodman, and Ulgitha.

But Banita, a simple-minded woman, and her husband, as simple as she, knew not the name of the man who had so liberally rewarded her for her services, and believed he and the babe were far away in Italy. They lived far from Zurichbold, and during all their lives had never visited Zurichbold, or its castle, nor seen any of its nobles. Neither expected ever to see or hear of the babe again. Neither knew much of or had ever seen the "Iron Hand" inn.

Nor did Ulgitha know more of the man for whose gold she had robbed Lady Louise of her babe than had been asserted by Randolph Schwartz; and in heart she often said:

"Schwartz may have lied to me, or he may have made a mistake."

Therefore, when Ulgitha set forth from the "Iron Hand" inn with the party of Sir Edred, she could not say to herself with any confidence:

"The babe which I stole from Lady Louise was sold to Sir David Orleton, and if alive is at Zurichbold Castle."

Perhaps, had she been able to assert the above as a fact beyond her own doubting, she might have made a full confession of her crime to Lady Louise. But, being unable to assert it as a fact, she did not dare to say to the parents:

"I stole and sold your child; but I do not know to whom I sold it, nor where it is."

The mother of Prince Eustace, the Dowager Princess Velina, of whom some mention has been made in our story, was now at the Castle of Zurichbold; but those who knew the truth of the deception were careful never to allow her to suspect that it was not the child of Princess Agnes and Prince Eustace. Therefore Princess Velina had no suspicion that the beautiful babe called "the Princess Isabelle" was not the daughter of her son, Prince Eustace.

The reader has no doubt long ago surmised the following facts:

That the Dowager Princess Velina, widow of Prince Egbert the Bold, was the mother of Sir Edred Van De Veer, as well as of Prince Eustace, the reigning Grand Duke of Zurichbold.

That Sir Edred was her eldest son, the infant heir of Zurichbold, abducted by Lady Sada Probstar thirty-five years before.

That Ernest was her grandson, and the son of Prince Eustace, the infant abducted by Lena Richt, *alias* Bethia Storrest.

That her brother, Count Charles Van Falkenburg, of whom Esther Warmley made special mention in the first part of this story, had, after the capture of Zurichbold by Baron Hermann, married the widowed mother of the woman Ulgitha Schwartz, and by her became the father of Lady Louise Van De Veer.

Therefore Princess Velina, widow of Egbert the Bold, was the mother of Prince Eustace and Sir Edred, the grandmother of Ernest, the aunt of Lady Louise Van De Veer, and the grand-aunt of that babe she supposed was her grand-daughter, the infant "Princess Isabelle."

Soon after the death of Princess Agnes had become fully re-established Count Charles and his countess, Lady Matilda—the mother of Lady Louise by the count, and of Ulgitha by Roland Yorke, and unknown grandmother of the infant "Princess Isabelle"—had arrived at the Castle of Zurichbold.

When the babe of the "Iron Hand" inn was presented to Lady Matilda as the child of Princess Agnes and heiress of Zurichbold, the grave and still-comely Englishwoman gazed upon the child with fearful eyes, and said to her husband, in a whisper:

"My lord, saw you ever so great a resemblance to our daughter Louise when she was a babe? Her eyes—her every feature? Ah, my mind flies back to the time when you loved better to fondle your beautiful babe than to live in the camp. Our daughter—I wonder where she is, and why she has not met us here at Zurichbold as she wrote she would?"

"She loves Sir Edred Van De Veer, the diamond merchant, far more than she does us," replied the

count, now a grave, gray, and austere man. "She is with him no doubt, though I—"

But here the count paused, and did not add, as he intended, "hope not." There was a rumour afloat at Zurichbold that the famous diamond merchant, Sir Edred Van De Veer, had been captured and slain by the Riders of the forest, and the count did not desire that his wife should hear of it, until more certain information could be obtained.

There was also a more important rumour of a war about to break out between Germany and France, and the cold mind of the count, who was both a warrior and a statesman, gave far more attention to this than to the other.

He little imagined that the careless glance he threw upon the infant was not upon his grand-niece, as he believed, but upon the child of his daughter. As little, too, did Lady Matilda imagine that she had good cause indeed to trace the features of her beloved daughter in those of the babe so idolised by Princess Agnes.

Little did Lady Matilda dream that within less than a hundred miles, for years, had lived her own idolised daughter Margaret, bearing the rude name of Ulgitha, in those dense and lawless shades called the Giant Forest; for Lady Matilda for twenty years had believed that daughter by her first husband, Roland Yorke, was dead. For twenty years, never forgetting the fair bride she had given to young Launcelot Hart, in England, this bereaved and affectionate mother had daily offered prayers to Heaven for the repose of that lost daughter's soul.

The calm, proud, yet upright Prince Eustace was unhappy. Never had he stooped to deceive man, woman or child until his consent to deceive his wife and the world by a stupendous fraud was forced from him by the vehement protestations of his old friend, Sir David Orleton. It pricked him to the heart when he yielded, as we related in the second chapter of the story. The deceit, ever before his eyes, had been a thorn in his side ever since. The step once taken, he could not retract it. He could not give a father's love to the babe—a babe not his, and of whose origin he knew nothing. With extreme effort he concealed from his wife his secret repugnance for the innocent babe. He shuddered when, to deceive his beloved wife, he pressed his lips to the rosy mouth of the beautiful infant.

There was no beauty in it for him. To him it was a living falsehood, born not of his blood, but a living remembrance of his falsehood to his wife and to the world.

Sir David watched him with unceasing vigilance; trusting, however, that time and habit, those two potent palliatives of all sins, would at length make callous the sensitive conscience of the prince, and even cause him to feel a kind of attachment for the child.

Princess Agnes never observed, never detected the secret sentiment of dislike, or rather of antipathy. The keener-eyed and more experienced Dowager Princess Velina did, but she attributed the feeling to the disappointment which she imagined the prince suffered in not having been presented with a son, and said nothing about it.

The two women, Ida and Esther, remained faithful to their vows of secrecy, and never, even in a whisper to each other, spoke of the death of the real heiress and the substitution of a false one.

Thus matters were at the Castle of Zurichbold several days after the departure of Sir Edred and his party from the "Iron Hand" inn, when, on the morning of a fair day, one of the chamberlains of the household, accompanied by a woman in worn and tattered garb, who was closely veiled, entered the private audience-chamber of the prince.

Prince Eustace was at the time seated near a table, conversing with Sir David Orleton and Count Charles, his uncle.

The matter under consideration was a projected invasion of the Giant Forest, the well-known haunt of those lawless bands known by the general name of the Riders. A well-founded report was abroad that the Baron of Zweibudden and his son Lord Senlis, Baron of Karlwold, had been captured and put to death by the bold marauders. The report that Sir Edred Van De Veer, the famous diamond merchant of Prague, with his wife and son, had been captured and held in captivity, and perhaps tortured, had also gained strength.

The three nobles cared little for the fate of the Van Ardens; yet the barons were of the nobility, and the same audacity that had prompted the marauders to capture Barons Hermann and Senlis might at any time lead them to attack other nobles. Besides, the wife of Sir Edred Van De Veer was the daughter of Count Charles, who had a high esteem for the character of his wealthy son-in-law, and who, now that the life of his daughter was reported to be in danger, found that ambition and a warlike career had not denied him the grief and anxiety of a father.

Thus the three nobles were discussing a plan for the immediate extermination of the great lawless association, when the chamberlain entered the audience room to say that a strange woman, who refused to give any name, was in the ante-chamber, demanding an immediate interview with his highness the prince.

"Whence comes she?" asked Prince Eustace.

"That she refuses to tell also, your grace. But she bade me say, if your highness refused to see her, thus: 'Tell Prince Eustace that I am one who has tidings of the fate of Lena Richt, and the heir of Zurichbold—'"

"Admit her instantly!" thundered Eustace, breaking in upon the speech of the chamberlain.

Then, as the latter turned away to obey, the prince, pale and agitated, grasped the arm of Sir David Orleton, and exclaimed:

"Did you hear? Tidings of my lost child—my infant Egbert!"

"Be calm, my lord," replied the grave Sir David. "Can it be possible that you still hope your lost son is alive?"

"The hope has never left me, Orleton—"

"This woman comes, no doubt, to practise upon your credulity and visionary hope," said Count Charles.

"Ah, neither you nor Orleton is the father of a lost child!" exclaimed the prince, in a sad tone.

"I am not sure of that, if this rumour of the capture of Sir Edred and his family is true. I may have a daughter to rescue or avenge," replied Count Charles, gravely. "But here returns your chamberlain with the woman; a ragged wench she is, and hiding her face wondrously carefully."

Of the face of the woman who now entered with the chamberlain nothing could be seen, as she wore a thick black veil, faded and dingy, over her head and features. In person she was tall and emaciated, her hands as meagre as those of a skeleton, and her strength seemed nearly exhausted, either by hunger or fatigue, or by both.

"Let her be seated," said the prince, perceiving her weakness at a glance, and the woman sank into a chair placed near her by the chamberlain.

"I confer with none whose face I may not see," said the prince, in the tone of a sovereign.

The woman replied as she withdrew the veil from her head and face:

"It was not because I feared recognition from any eye that is here or elsewhere that I have veiled my face, my lord. Seeing this sight, who would rather have fled from me than conducted me to your highness?"

The chamberlain and the three nobles started with horror as their eyes fell upon the hideous visage revealed by the withdrawal of the veil. Its features were a mass of unhealed scars and inflamed wounds. There was scarcely the semblance of anything human in it, except the fierce, flashing black eyes.

"Away!" exclaimed Sir David, rising angrily. "This woman is the emissary of some foe of Zurichbold! She has some terrible disease upon her—"

"Nay!" cried the woman. "I come from the Giant Forest, and this torn and destroyed face is the work of wolves! I am she who disappeared with the son of Prince Eustace! I am the nurse—Lena Richt!"

(To be continued.)

HOW DID LADY NEVILLE DIE?

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Unloved Wife," "The Curse of Everleigh," &c.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Nothing emboldens sin so much as mercy.

Timon of Athens.

For several minutes after Marie had conducted the bewildered and terrified Felice from the sumptuously decorated apartment the Countess Pheefaux sat apparently absorbed in intense thought. Her hands were clasped tightly together upon the top of her ebony staff, her eyes were bent upon the ground. But whether her thoughts were of joy or sorrow, of triumph or despair, could not be learned from the rigid immobility of that painted and wrinkled face. Even in solitude she exercised the most cautious self-control.

The countess suddenly remembered that Upden was awaiting an interview with her, and, summoning Marie, she gave orders that he should be admitted.

It was the lawyer's turn to see the haughty countess at last. He had not submitted patiently to wait her pleasure. But gnaw his finger ends as he might, he had waited. He dared not do otherwise.

He had never encountered the Countess Pheefaux personally before. He went to the interview when Marie summoned him with mingled emotions of foreboding and curiosity. Perhaps the latter predominated, in spite of the peril of his position. He was prepared for eccentricities, to behold a titled and jewelled old shrew, but at the first step beyond the

sable-hung door of the black saloon his dishonest soul quailed suddenly within him, and his gaze fastened upon the pictured grin and horrible gallows tree that faced him with something of the same terrible fascination that had filled Felice.

As for the countess, her emotion at sight of him was so great that for some moments she never moved from her position or uttered a word. She spoke at last, with the inscrutable glitter of those terrible goggles menacing him, and her ebony staff uplifted.

"You'll come to it," she cried, in her wickedest voice. "Oh, you'll come to it fast enough. The road to the gallows is paved with just such deeds as yours."

Upden bent his head and bit his lip fiercely. No man could listen to such words unmoved, however deserved, and the wicked lawyer had plenty of spirit. The countess's lips contracted maliciously.

"You wished to speak with me," she said, with her peculiar utterance.

"I did. Your ladyship has honoured me with your enmity. Wherefore?"

"Was that all you came for?" she asked, with an hysterical chuckle.

"I am at a loss to guess how I have won your hostility," bowed Upden.

"By deserving it," sneered his ladyship.

"May I ask how?"

"That is not what you came for. You came to see if there were any chances for you."

"Any chance for what?"

"The old woman's neck."

"There is not the ghost of one. I mean to destroy you, root and branch."

Upden forced a smile.

"Really?" he said, but his voice was harsh. "I am at a loss to understand how, clever as I know your ladyship to be."

"Shall I tell you how?"

The lawyer looked at her steadily.

"I should be glad to know."

The countess laughed mockingly. Then she tapped slightly upon the floor with her ebony staff to emphasise her words.

"When that lawyer comes into court again there won't be the difficulty in proving the forgery there was before."

Upden paled slightly, but he still looked incredulous.

"You forgot the water-mark on the paper you used," continued the countess. "The paper on which your false will is written was not made at the time the will is dated."

There was a dead silence for some moments. Then Upden lifted his face, grown haggard in so few moments.

"You have not only to prove forgery, but to prove who did it."

"I know. I have a number of your letters written on the same paper, and an expert has already traced the points of resemblance in the handwritings."

"Then the matter has passed beyond compromise?"

"Precisely."

"Restitution——" began the lawyer, his voice cracking.

"Too late for that."

The man fairly staggered under the blow.

"My wife, my child, oh! great Heaven!" he stammered, disorientedly.

"You should have thought of them sooner. How many poor wretches with wives and children have you betrayed to infamy?"

Upden hung his stricken head, and thought of Sir Angus Saville and that young wife whom people said suffering had driven mad.

"My lady," he wailed, "I have heard that you are trying to prove Sir Angus Saville an innocent man. If I could help you——"

A terrible cry, like a tortured heart finding voice at last, rang through the room.

"You help me, you who fawned on him only to betray him! Ah! you demon lawyer, you are at my mercy now, as he was at yours then. The mercy you gave shall be given you—no more. So help me Heaven—no more!"

The countess rang her bell for Marie, sharply.

"Take him away," she said, striking the floor with her staff, excitedly, "away, away!"

CHAPTER XLV.

"To suffer to be that which we destroy a creature by destruction live in doubtful joy."

Macbeth.

Felice, when she reached Neville House, waited only to remove her wrappings, before she sought her mistress.

Madame Revere stood in her dressing-room, her eyes strained upon something she had just taken out of a secret drawer in her jewel-box. She did not hear her maid come in. Indeed, Felice advanced stealthily on purpose.

"Is one of those the key of the lumber room, madame?" she asked, suddenly, in her mistress's very ear.

Madame started so violently that both the keys she held fell from her hand.

She gathered them up quickly, and thrust them back in their hiding-place, turning round angrily.

"I did not ring for you, Felice."

"No, madame," answered the maid, insolently.

"Leave the room then, until I do."

Felice laughed, and threw herself into a velvet chair.

"I came to get those keys, madame."

Madame looked at her in amazement. Confederates in guilt though they were, Madame Revere had never seen her wicked French maid in such a mood as this before.

The relative positions of mistress and maid had always been strictly preserved. But now madame was more startled at the insolent, domineering expression in Felice's little yellow-green eyes than at her demanding those keys which had for her such terrible associations.

Felice, indeed, with a frightful secret of her own to keep, and being bad rather than ambitious, had been content with her luxurious, easy life, and dependent position, as well as satisfied with what she was paid for keeping the secrets of others. But it had just been said to her:

"Do to Madame Revere what she was to Lady Neville in life. Thwart her. Tyrannise over—humiliate her before her own servants. Make her days just such a terror as were the days of that murdered Lady Neville."

It had been said to Felice, moreover:

"The instant I suspect you of treachery to me, or disobedience, off goes your head!"

"What has come over you, Felice?" demanded madame. "I never saw you like this before."

"You will never see me any other way hereafter, madame; so look out."

"Leave the room instantly!"

Felice laughed again more insolently than before.

"There is more than one key to the lumber-room, madame!" she said. "Come with me and try it in the door if you dare!"

Madame shivered. She shrank more from the proposition than from the astounding impudence of Felice's manner.

Suddenly she ran up to Felice and shook her by the arm.

"Tell me, this instant, what you mean?" she said, hoarsely, her magnificent eyes dark with passion and fright.

"I won't."

Suddenly she went into the next room, shut the door, and looked it.

The waiting-maid laughed loudly.

Then, as she swung slowly to and fro in a luxurious velvet chair, she muttered to herself, with a horrible exultation:

"I like it. I shall have to go often and take lessons of that painted, goggled-eyed old woman. It is good, it is sweet as honey to make madame suffer as I did. I wish I could think of some new torment that would bring her out of there."

She rose and cast her green eyes over the room—madame's dressing-room.

A shawl of costly Indian cashmere lay in a gorgeous heap on the floor.

Felice caught it up and put it on before the gold-framed cheval glass, strutting like a peacock, while malicious fires burned in her eyes.

Madame had left her jewel-box open. She went to it and quickly found the secret drawer in which were the keys; she had marked it as her frightened mistress thrust it to.

"I am going," she called to madame, and struck the keys sharply together.

The closed door was instantly unlocked and opened; Madame Revere came through it with her haughty face like ashes.

"Are you possessed by an evil spirit?" she asked.

"Give me those keys."

"Madame, it must be something bright and glittering. Give me the topaz bracelet there, and you shall have the keys."

Madame snatched the bracelet and flung it at her. The Frenchwoman in her turn flung the keys at madame with a loud laugh. Then, seizing the bracelet, she relieved her half-crazed mistress of her presence.

"Great Heaven!" said madame to herself. "what does all this mean?"

Felice went away exulting to herself like some beast of prey after a feast of blood.

"I never guessed what fun it would be," she muttered as she tried her topaz bracelet on her yellow, shrunken arm.

Claude Revere might perhaps have been up ere this from the bed he loathed so but for his own impatience.

Vance had come back and brought word that there was a young English girl in the French madhouse of which the Countess Pheaux had told, but she was not Lady Audrey Saville.

It was while he lay thus, chafing, that a note was brought him by Peters, who was still in attendance upon him.

The hand was unfamiliar. He tore it open.

"Ask Madame Revere where Lady Saville is, if you really wish to know."

That was all the note contained. There was no signature.

Claude remembered suddenly what madame had said to him, coming home from the countess's supper, the night after the opera.

He sent for her in a rage, and showed her the note without warning.

It seemed to the wicked woman that she felt her own blood turning to ice. She gasped and grew white.

"What have you done with Lady Audrey?" he demanded. "I swear to you, madame, if you do not tell me shortly, I shall forget that there is any natural tie between us. Have you served her as you did that other woman who was obnoxious to you?"

She fixed a cold pair of eyes on his agitated face.

"Did you indeed ask what I had done with Lady Saville? You do not ask such a question seriously, surely?"

"Do I look as though I was joking?"

"No, that is what puzzles me. What could I possibly have done with Lady Audrey without your knowledge? Do you imagine I could have spirited her away anywhere, I who have been with you here so constantly? Besides, what interest could I have?"

"I mistrust you, madame. You hate her; and you know the day I marry her I mean to give you a separate establishment. I mean to have but one mistress of my own house."

He waited a moment.

"I will trouble you to ring that bell."

Madame rang without suspecting what was wanted.

When his false lordship gave the order to send Felice to him she started from her seat.

"Don't go, madame," said Claude, sarcastically; "it is possible you may be interested in what I am about to say to Felice, who stands so high in your confidence."

"You are about to question her," exclaimed madame, "and the girl is in no fit state to speak of anything. She talked like a crazy person to me this afternoon. I believe she has suddenly gone mad."

"We will see how she will talk to me," sneered Claude.

Madame sank back into her seat breathless. She dared not leave the room.

The Frenchwoman came creeping in with her usual stealthy, subservient look, and none of the domineering, strange insolence of manner that had so perplexed her mistress an hour before. But madame tried in vain to catch her eye.

"Felice," said Claude, bluntly, "I have sent for you about a matter of grave importance to me. I am aware that you are in all Madame Revere's little secrets. Tell me where Lady Saville is, and you shall have one hundred pounds before you leave the room. Here it is."

Claude showed her the money in new, crisp Bank of England notes.

The woman's stealthy eyes glittered. She shot a furtive glance at Madame Revere, who trembled in spite of her.

"Have you asked madame?" said Felice, demurely, casting down her wicked eyes.

"I did not send for you here to ask me questions, but to respond to mine," replied Claude, angrily.

"Madame, will you leave the room? I see plainly the woman will not speak while you are in it."

Madame braced herself with a rigid look.

"I won't go!" she cried. "I have a right to hear what falsehoods she will make up to earn her hundred pounds, and I will hear!"

"Ring that bell, Felice. You forget that I am master here, madame. Will you go yourself, or wait to be made to go?"

Madame rose, gasping for breath, and glaring at Felice.

The Frenchwoman turned from the bed and smiled defiantly in her mistress's very face.

At this insult all madame's self-possession forsook her. She fled from the room like a crazy woman, and rushed to her own apartment. Taking the concealed keys from a new hiding-place she had found for them, she set out for the lumber-room in wild haste.

It was growing dusky in the long, stately halls and corridors of Neville House, and madame's hand shook as she unlocked the door of the store-room and cast searching glances about to see if she was spied upon.

Her teeth were chattering as she approached the



[MISTRESS AND MAID.]

great carved and brass-bound chest with the key in her hand.

The silence was extreme—awful; the smell of the room horribly suggestive.

But madame had come there for a purpose, and, scared as she was, she held to it, when she thought of insolent Felice and implacable, love-stricken Claude. Twice the key fell from her shaking fingers. The third time it entered the lock, but would not turn till madame put both hands to the task, and wrenched desperately at both lid and lock, when the cover flew up suddenly, and the death-scented air, escaping from its confinement, smote madame full in the face.

One glance was enough to show the doubled-up, convulsed, and inanimate figure inside, the boy's cap crushed and torn, the head of short, black curls with the small hands clenched among them. The body lay partially upon its face, not so much so but that the wicked woman could see and recognise it.

She covered her mouth with both hands tightly to keep from screaming.

Suddenly she heard footsteps approaching. She heard Felice's voice, and a horrible thrill shot through her as the maid stopped by the door, in which she all at once remembered that she had left the key.

The next instant the key was turned in the lock and withdrawn, and the footsteps retreated swiftly.

Madame Revere was a prisoner, alone, in the room with the body of her victim, and night had come.

CHAPTER XLVI.

They whose guilts within their bosoms lie
Imagine every eye beholds their blame.

Shakespeare.

A BLACKER record than the real story of Carlos Bohun's life does not often come to light. He was a Spaniard and a gentleman by birth; a renegade, a black-minded robber, and scoundrel by profession. Of course his real name was not Carlos Bohun. That had been through too much slime and wickedness, noble as it was to begin with, to make it safe to hold it, even as head of so infamous a confederation as the Fatal Twelve.

He it was who had originated and brought into working order the powerful league which was now so imminently threatened with dissolution.

He might have taken the advice contained in the queer countess's letter, and fled the country safe, with a rich booty, this Carlos Bohun; but there was too much recklessness about him for that, too much vanity, perhaps. He rather fancied pitting himself against the notorious French detective, if, as he suspected, madame the countess and Vidocq were one.

Over the dead body of the suicide, Seymour, the

band, at his command, had again cast lots for that fatal mission which their companion had just evaded by so desperate a remedy, and this time the loaded weapon fell to Bohun himself.

He smiled grimly when he saw it, and the look of deadly bravado that he flashed round said more than words could have done.

That was a week ago now, seven of these fourteen days of grace which her queer ladyship had set the Twelve were gone and nothing accomplished yet.

Carlos Bohun, the bold and cunning villain, found himself at a standstill, or nearly so. But one course seemed open to him; to make his way inside her queer ladyship's splendid residence, by stratagem, and that—knowing from experience the devotion of her servants—looked, indeed, a desperate venture. He paced slowly in sight of her house one stormy, dark evening at a safe distance from the blaze of the light which on ever so gloomy a night made the vicinity of the palatial mansion like mid-day.

"Can she have got wind of what was up?" he muttered to himself, darkly. "Ah!" he continued, as a form came out of the shadows at the lower end of the alley in which he was, and slowly advanced towards him. "Is it you, Brice?" he asked, eagerly.

The other came nearer.

"This changed her mind about going out," he whispered, in a scared voice; "Marie is ill."

Bohun started. He knew the maid's faithfulness.

"Who takes Marie's place with her mistress?" he demanded, still more eagerly than before.

The other hesitated. He looked like an under footman, what could be seen of him. At last he said, with a stammer:

"My sister Lucy is with her now. My lady always fancies her."

An evil smile broke over Bohun's compressed lips.

"To-night shall make an honest woman of your sister, Brice, if she will do my will," he said, eagerly.

Brice grew pale and looked up in anger.

"What do you know about Lucy?"

"I know her pretty well, my good fellow," laughed Bohun, in his reckless, wicked way. "I always liked the little one. She shall be my wife to-morrow, if all should go well."

Brice gave him a sudden, dark, and startled look. Then he said:

"I was going to take her to America with the money you promised me."

"Here it is. We'll all stay here, I tell you, if this should go well to-night," said Bohun, producing a long silk purse, which seemed heavy with gold.

"You swear you'll marry Lucy?" demanded Brice, without looking at the money.

"I swear it," replied Bohun, lifting his hand with a mock air of solemnity.

The next moment, as he followed Brice, he was saying to himself, with a careless laugh, "One wife more or less doesn't matter to a fellow like me."

Lucy Brice was one of the queer countess's whims. The girl was rather young, and her pale, pretty face and large, melancholy eyes had taken her ladyship's fancy. She was most kind to her in her fashion, and Lucy worshipped her mistress all the more for the unhappiness and despair that were secretly consuming her young heart.

Carlos Bohun was not a man of scruples or superstitions, but even he shivered uncomfortably as he found himself alone in the gloom of the black saloon.

Four immense wax candles stood on massive ebony stands at the four corners of the room, and in their white light the gallows-tree on the wall looked more horribly real than ever.

For the first time, perhaps, since he saw poor Seymour's brains bespatter the floor he thought of that unhappy man with a sensation akin to terror.

He was not very imaginative, but, of course, it was only imagination which made him fancy he saw the white, menacing face of the wretch who was really his victim watching him from the canvas. Seymour, not three minutes before he shot himself, it may be remembered, had promised to haunt this man as long as he lived.

Bohun rallied himself after a minute or so, and looked about him curiously. But his eye would come back to that fancy of his—Seymour's face watching him behind the painted gallows.

A curious intuition was that which had prompted the queer countess to have the face of that unhappy suicide added to her sombre painting.

She had seen him for an instant as she drove by in her carriage when the police were lifting his corpse from the pavement. Some after-speculations concerning him which reached her suggested the idea, which was, perhaps, an inspiration. At any rate, it was really Seymour's face which was painted there, and the effect, even upon so desperate and hardened a scoundrel as Carlos Bohun, may be imagined. No wonder he thought his eyes deceived him, and as he forced them away for the twentieth time resolved he would not look at the strange picture again, and so turned his back upon it.

He came face to face with madame the countess. As though she had risen out of the black and white squares of marble like some omnipresent and cunning old fairy, the queer, little old woman stood there nodding at him.

(To be continued.)



[JASPER BLOUNT UNDER FIRE.]

WHY DID HE MARRY HER?

CHAPTER IV.

Oh, for a falconer's voice
To lure this tassel-gentle back again.
Romeo and Juliet.

In the private office of Sir Selwyn Viner, a distinguished London lawyer, sat Mr. Jasper Blount on the morning succeeding the unwilling departure of Rose from her father's house with Mr. Grey.

Jasper was taking professional advice upon her affairs.

Mr. Lester was very unwell; Mrs. Lester was beside herself with grief; Harry Winchester was under arrest.

Nobody seemed to be able to do a thing in it but Mr. Jasper Blount, and he vowed that he had never been so upset in his life about anything.

Having unfolded the whole case as far as he had been able to make it out from the disgraced Hardwick in a visit to Chillington, Mr. Jasper Blount now sat staring in the great lawyer's face with earnest attention.

The great lawyer opened his mouth and Mr. Jasper Blount devoured every word he spoke as if it had been the choicest morsel.

"Lady denies the validity of the marriage," said Sir Selwyn, importantly. "Gentleman asserts its validity. You, in the interests of the lady, desire to prove it null, so that she may return to her family. Now then, to pick a flaw in the gentleman's position. First, as to canonical disabilities. Has either of the parties a husband or wife living? No, neither has been married before. Are they too nearly related by blood? No, they are no relations. By marriage? No, they are not connected at all. Sir, there is no flaw there. Second, as to legal disabilities. Is either of the parties a minor? No. Therefore the consent of parents or guardians was not required. Is either of the parties idiot or lunatic? No, they are both of sound mind. Now for the last legal disability. Was the lady married by a clergyman in full orders, in a private place, by special dispensation—the magistrate of the district giving her away—sir, was she married without her consent?"

"Sir Selwyn Viner, I have come to you to learn whether she consented or not. She thought the ceremony was a joke; she went through the bride's part, repeating the bride's words as she would have done in a drama. Was that consenting?"

The lawyer knitted his bushy brows, rose, and brought a volume from his bookcase.

In a few moments he had turned to a paragraph, and read as follows:

"With respect to the evidence to prove the contract of marriage, it is held that in a case where the promise of the man was proved, and no actual promise of the woman, that evidence of her carrying herself as consenting and approving his promise was sufficient."

In silence Sir Selwyn Viner put back the volume, and in silence Mr. Jasper Blount watched him.

A bitter curl of the lips proclaimed the old man's defeat.

"They are bound by mutual obligations," said the lawyer, resuming his chair. "They are lawfully married."

"But, sir, common-sense shows us that her consent was no consent at all," cried Mr. Jasper Blount. "What then?"

"Then it must be proved that fraud was used to obtain it."

Mr. Jasper Blount muttered a savage "Humph!" "Won't her word, backed by her friends, prove that fraud was used?" demanded he.

"She carried herself at the time as consenting," quoted Sir Selwyn. "Now, sir, to put a case. Had the lady been in a state of aberration, or somnambulism, while she responded to the vows, or had she been deceived in the identity of the man she was marrying, and responded to him as A. all the time that he was B, then the marriage would be null, fraud having been used. She married him of her own free will, no obstacles being in the way. She did not use proper caution, therefore she cannot visit her imprudence upon him. If he choose to advance his claim she must live with him as his wife."

Mr. Jasper Blount rose, foiled and miserable. "The law can't help us," said he; "we must help ourselves."

He went back to his son's lodgings grievously disappointed.

He began to hate James Grey with the fervour of impotent indignation.

The circumstances under which he had met him first recurred to his mind in sinister array.

His unexplained anxiety to marry poor, lustreless Alice Blount; his face of vengeance when Blount had met him coming out of Grimward the morning of his final dismissal; Blount's ever-recurring suspicions that his miserly brother had a concealed hoard which James Grey knew of—oh! how he hated to think that such a mercenary wretch should have succeeded in snatching sweet Rose Lester, the good and generous and devoted, out of his own beloved Harry's very arms! And why, oh, why, had he married her? Not for her wealth, poor darling—she had not a sixpence save what she earned by her

painting on ivory. Not for her beauty—for James Grey had proved that he was not apt to be fastidious in his choice of a wife.

What would not Jasper Blount have given to find some weapon lying perdu in the dusky shadows of James Grey's past, whose sharp edge he might turn upon the villain?

A moment or two after Blount had arrived at Harry's lodgings, Harry himself came in.

He had been allowed bail, and was to appear in three days to answer for his assault, Mr. Grey having written that he would return in that time and prosecute him.

He was furious with Rose's wrongs, and foaming at the mouth to learn that she had been forced to accompany her base persecutor to his house.

It was as much as the shrewd old Jasper Blount could do to calm down the unhappy youth, so that he might not plunge into some mad enterprise which would ruin himself and Rose too.

"Harry, my dear boy," implored the old man, with tears in his eyes, "be guided by me. Rose has been proved by a lawyer to be James Grey's wife. Don't look like that, my poor fellow! Heaven knows I sympathise with your loss. But there's no use going frantic over it. Let us do what we can to save the dear girl from the infamy of living with a man she detests. You can't have her, boy, but for all that we must get her out of his reach. I swear I'll separate them if I were to spend my last shilling on it. But you must leave the whole affair in my hands; you mustn't move a finger in it. You can't take up the cause of another man's wife without tarnishing her fair fame, which I dare swear you would die to preserve in its purity. No, Harry, let me help Rose, and do you look after these two poor old people, who I verily believe have got their death-blow. Tell 'em that I've gone to Schofield to bring Rose back, and although I cannot restore her to her parents a free woman, still it will be some comfort to have her near them in their grief."

That same night Mr. Jasper posted up to the border, reaching Schofield at midnight, cold, hungry, and exhausted, but resolved on saving the pet lamb from the jaws of the wolf. At an early hour the next morning the sturdy old fellow was knocking at Mr. Grey's office door.

He was informed that Mr. Grey was in and would see him.

"Now, then, for my friendly move," thought Mr. Blount, screwing up his courage.

Smooth-faced, elegantly attired, a calm, elated bridegroom, Mr. Grey received his visitor, requesting to know his wishes.

Putting aside a desire to knock Mr. Grey down, Mr. Blount informed him that he had come as Mr. Lester's agent, the latter being ill, in order to make a proposition with regard to Mrs. Grey.

Mr. Grey expressed decorous regret on the subject of Mr. Lester's indisposition, and awaited his visitor's proposition.

Mr. Blount requested Mr. Grey to make a compromise with his wife's relatives, and to agree to a separation, so that his wife might reside with her relatives, with his consent, continuing to bear his name.

Mr. Grey was sorry to have to refuse such a compromise. He could not part with his wife to please her relatives.

Mr. Blount, still endeavouring to be friendly, then begged Mr. Grey to name any sum which he would consider indemnity for the loss of the society of his wife.

Mr. Grey was insulted by such a suggestion, refused to listen to anything more from Mr. Blount, and loftily showed him out.

Mr. Blount went, deeply mortified at his defeat; and, to spite his foe, had himself immediately driven to Crowlands, Chudleigh Heath.

Standing at the foot of the grand scroll of steps which ascended to the front door, he stared like a housebreaker at every window within range, and, when weary of the fruitless quest, rang the bell.

A woman opened the door, a woman who minced and bridled, and tried to cover her large red hands with her black satin apron.

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Mr. Blount, "do I stumble over Rachel Craine again?"

Rachel Craine indeed it was, in a smart gown, and a dounced apron, with flowers in her cap.

She had advanced from the pots of Grimward to the silver and golden service of Crowlands.

"My eyes!" screamed the maid, backing. "What ha' thou thought of seein' you here, Mr. Blount? Vy, sir, be my old missies new husband gone dead? and be you a 'unting up Mr. Grey again?"

Mr. Blount glowered at her.

"What d'ye mean, woman?" demanded he. "I'm hanged if I can make head or tail out of your jabber!"

"Oh, aren't you been to Mrs. Schmitz's yet? They keeps 'ouse in Blenheim Street, close by Mrs. Fitzroy's. I'm surprised—"

"So am I, you jade!" interrupted Mr. Jasper.

"Who is Mrs. Schmitz, and what do I care for Mrs. Schmitz?"

Rachel enjoyed herself immensely at this moment.

"Vell, now, Mr. Blount, I 'as to lart—to he!" she tittered, "to think that you, as was so careful of Widow Blount, shouldn't ha' got no 'weddin' cake, nor even the paper with the 'weddin' into it!"

"Mrs. Blount married?" yelled the old man.

"Married, you vixon?"

"Ho! he! he! I should think so!" giggled Rachel; "hand 'elped to her 'usband by that 'ere persing Mrs. Fitzroy, who set her agin Mr. Grey."

"Mrs. Fitzroy!" yelled Mr. Jasper Blount, more and more astounded, "the woman that stopped her wedding! Heaven grant me patience!" gasped Mr. Jasper Blount, stamping about. "I don't understand half this wench says. What's become of Grimward?"

"Exploded, mister; burned up; nowhere!"

"Who set fire to it, eh? Tell me!" stormed Mr. Jasper Blount, whose face had grown livid.

"La, sir, how should I know, when all Schofield 'as been 'unted up and down in wain to find the willan?"

Mr. Jasper Blount wiped his face, and for the first time seemed a trifle overheated.

"Well, Rachel," said he, after a pause, "you've given me unexpected news; have you any more like that?"

"No more," said Rachel, who began to feel very inquisitive about his motive for appearing there; "but hif you 'as any business with master I kin take a message."

"Ah! hump!" grunted Mr. Jasper Blount, thus recalled to business; "by the way, Rachel, how is it that you are so much patronized by Mr. Grey?"

She tossed her head.

"A faithful servant never wants for a place," simpered she, "and I 'as served Mr. Grey to that extent that he 'as put me 'ere as own maid to 'is lady. What kin I do for you, sir?"

"You can lead me to Mrs. Grey."

"Sorry to disoblige a hold friend," said Rachel, impudently; "but Mr. Grey's horders is so positive."

"And pray what are they?"

"That missis aren't to be worried with visitors."

Mr. Jasper Blount growled out some expletive more suitable to Rachel's ears than ours.

"Deed, Mr. Blount, I'm sorry to vex you," grinned the maid, charmed to find an opportunity of paying up old scores, "hand if it were to be a sovering out of my own pocket I wouldn't begrudge it to ye, but I can't let you see missis."

"Will you tell her I'm here for a sovereign into your pocket?" roared the old man.

"Oh, certingly," said Rachel, and ran upstairs.

Mr. Jasper Blount strutted back and forward on the piazza, sneering at the magnificent footman who kept guard at the door.

The footman offered him a hall chair with impressive and crushing politeness, and the wicked old man swore at him and asked him if he thought he was a porter.

Presently Rachel appeared with a hypocritical air.

Mr. Blount took the stipulated coin from his pocket and twirled it invitingly in the sun.

"Missis's compliments," said she, turning away her longing eyes from temptation, "and she are so sorry Mr. Blount should have took the trouble for to come so far for nothink. Missis wants you to know as 'ow she 'ave made up 'er mind not to disobey 'er dear 'usband for all the relashings in the three kingdoms. Missis's own words, sir."

"You lying gipsy!" cried Mr. Jasper Blount, "you've made up every word of that. You've taken care not to tell her that I am here, that's the truth of it. Do you see this sovereign? You might have earned a hundred of them by one act of kindness to your new mistress. As it is—"

With a spiteful toss of his chin he put it into his pocket, and hobbled down the steps.

Repeated defeats had much ruffled the old gentleman's temper; as he retreated a string of denunciations fell from his well-practised tongue.

A guarded exclamation from above arrested him upon the bottom step.

A balcony ran under the windows of the first floor, and, looking up, he beheld a figure crouching behind a tall porphyry jar containing a flowering shrub, and vividly signalling to him.

There was the pale and besuteful Rose, whose large eyes met his in a burning, passionately grateful gaze that set his old heart plunging as it had not done for thirty years.

With a presence of mind much to be admired under such circumstances, the old man held his peace, and stood immovable while she made some rapid signs, and hastily withdrew into the chamber.

Making out that he had been invited to stay where he was, Mr. Jasper Blount kept his position, well aware that he was under the fire of the eyes of at least two of Mr. Grey's domestics, who were paid to keep Rose Lester a prisoner; and he affected to be examining the widows of each successive storey for signs of her.

At length something white fluttered down beside him, and vanished in a bed of flame-coloured tulips.

Mr. Jasper Blount anxiously searched for it with his stick.

Rachel ran down, with a flush on her cheek and a vixenish sparkle in her eye.

"Ave you lost anything?" she inquired, then straightway began to search among the tulips.

"No, here it is," answered Mr. Blount,ardonically, as he clutched a morsel of paper. "Now be off and mind your business!"

He entered his vehicle, mounted his spectacles, and read these words:

"For Heaven's sake, send me my mother! I have not promised not to see her. Rose."

Mr. Blount thrust his head out of the window of the vehicle, and gazed up at the balcony. A little white hand was fluttering a handkerchief behind the shrub.

He nodded his head once or twice, withdrew it, and rattled off.

"So, so!" muttered he to himself, "she's not to see her friends! He has wrung that promise from her. Oh, the scoundrel! It's me he is afraid of, it's me! And well he may be. Drive to Blenheim Street, house of Mrs. Fitzroy, don't know what number, but you must find out."

"Yes, sir," cheerily returned cabby, and off they scoured.

CHAPTER XVI.

No rage is there like love to hatred turned,
Nor greater fury than a woman scorned.

It is due time the toy-house of Kate Fitzroy was found, and Mr. Jasper Blount was grimly bowing to that lady.

Mrs. Fitzroy was beautiful, was bland, was blazing with rich raiment.

Her crimson *négligée* exposed the front of a lace skirt; her panier was magnificent, her curls long and black.

Her tawny, downy hands were glittering with superb rings, and, oh! what a sultana was Kate Fitzroy!

"Madam, my name is Blount, Jasper Blount," began the old gentleman, winking before the dazzling vision; "you are, I presume, Mrs. Fitzroy?"

"I'm that same," said she, airily; "and I've heard

Alice tell a deal about her brother-in-law. Sit down, my good Mr. Blount, and be comfortable."

Mr. Jasper sat down, eyeing her askance.

"You are the young woman who gave my sister-in-law such a fright the day she stood up with James Grey to be married," said he, bluntly. "Now, ma'am, I've come to ask you something about all that."

"You have, eh?" gleefully laughed Kate, showing her white teeth, "and supposing I'm not meaning to answer you a word about it?"

"Oh, I don't expect much sense from a woman who could act like a lunatic," retorted Mr. Jasper, "but I expect to glean something. You contrived to break off the match between Alice and Mr. Grey, and, of course, you had your reasons."

"Of course," jibed Kate, bridling and growing rosy, while her wicked eyes sparkled.

"And I've a confoundedly serious reason for wanting to hear some of 'em," continued Mr. Jasper Blount, soberly; "and, as I see you are an Irishwoman, I shouldn't wonder if you had the warmest heart in the world. Whatever you know about James Grey, you must know him to be a pitiful scoundrel."

"Is it me you're expecting to say 'Yes'?" cried Kate, wrathfully. "No, sir; not to that, sir. James Grey may have made a fool of Alice Schmitz; he never made a fool of me. James Grey is going to marry me before long; so look out that you don't come between the blades of the scissors."

Mr. Jasper bounced off his chair with a loud shout that left Mrs. Fitzroy's rosy mouth open like a coral ring.

"When did he say that, ma'am?" roared he, rubbing his hands and almost capering round the room; "just tell me that little tidbit, ma'am, and I have him!"

"I'll see you at Jericho before I'll be telling my private concerns to an old chap like you!" cried spirited Kate. "You don't like James Grey, and I do, and I'd be a goose to give you any satisfaction about him."

Mr. Jasper Blount moderated his transports a little.

"Don't you know that James Grey has brought home a wife already?" said he, viciously.

Kate Fitzroy started violently.

"What!" she screamed. "Say that again."

"The scoundrel has forced Rose Lester to marry him," pursued Mr. Jasper Blount.

Kate uttered a long, wailing cry.

Her splendid face grew dead-white, she stretched forth her arms wildly, and fastened her dark, agonised eyes upon the astonished old man.

"Heaven preserve me!" ejaculated he, "she's the very twin of Alice Blount!"

"Deserted!" shrieked Kate. "Oh, Heaven help me, deserted after all!"

She rose and paced the room with wild and passionate gestures. Her bosom heaved, her lips quivered; low, frantic sobs escaped them.

Mr. Jasper Blount could not repress some genuine sympathy when he beheld the unfortunate woman's despair.

"Who is Rose Lester?" cried Kate, at last, turning her blazing eyes upon him.

"A young lady who was engaged to my son," returned Mr. Jasper Blount, "whose heart is broken by this marriage. Grey forced her into it."

"She did not marry him for love?" huskily inquired the woman.

"No, indeed, poor child. Why he married her at all is a mystery to me."

"He married her to break my heart!" wailed Kate, giving way to ungovernable passion. "Oh, but I'll be revenged! I will!"

Frenzied shrieks burst from her, she flung herself upon a sofa, and gave way completely to her feelings.

In rushed her maid, and amid the confusion which followed Mr. Jasper Blount was glad to escape with what information he had picked up.

As he hobbled along the quiet pavement, on his way to a telegraph office, he was pursued by Kate Fitzroy's despairing cry:

"Deserted!"

"And he promised to marry her!" reflected Mr. Jasper, rubbing his hands. "Why didn't she tell me whether it was previous to the twenty-fourth, or subsequently? Surely I can turn this weapon against him!"

Mr. Jasper sent this message by telegraph to Mrs. Lester:

"Rose sends for you; go to her to-morrow."

Then he retraced his steps to Blenheim Street, and applied for admittance at the house of Harold Schmitz, Esq.

A trim and tidy house it was, and the bride was alone, in all the glory of fresh morning robe and complacency.

"La! is it you, Jasper?" said she, with a little scream, as he stalked in, and a flush of sheepishness overspread her cheeks.

"Yes, ma'am, here I am," said Mr. Jasper. "Wish

you joy, Alice. And now, in the name of sense, who is he?"

"I—I scarcely know—sit down, Jasper," blushing stammered the bride.

"Bless me, ma'am! don't know?" reiterated Mr. Jasper, with cutting surprise. "What did you marry him for then?"

"Please, dear Jasper, don't be angry," whimpered Mrs. Schmitz; "but—but I was so lonely, and so afraid that Mr. Grey would harm me, and Kate thought so much of Harold, and advised me to accept him—and you had left me in a passion—and—"

"That will do for the present," cried Mr. Jasper, waving back the stream of explanations with a face of terror, "and if you're going to cry at me I'm off instantly. How did you come to burn Grimward down?"

"Me burn Grimward?" ejaculated Mrs. Schmitz, in horror. "Oh, Jasper, surely you don't blame me for it! Why, I was stopping all night with Mrs. Fitzroy, next door, and started from her house to the church, and when we all went to take breakfast at Grimward we found that wicked man James Grey looking in at the wicket, and the house nothing but a pile of rubbish."

Mr. Jasper Blount's eyes glistened.

"Ay," he nodded. "When was that?"

"On the morning of the twenty-second."

"And James Grey saw you come back a married woman?"

"Yes," said some awful things, thanking me for taking myself so finely out of his way, and Kate for planning so nicely to help him on with his schemes."

"Ay," again breathed Mr. Jasper Blount; "then we went to London and married Miss Lester on the twenty-fourth."

"My gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Schmitz, "what ever will Kate say when she hears of it?"

"What has Kate to do with it?"

"Oh, the wicked, bad villain!" cried Mrs. Schmitz, "he had no right to marry anybody but Kate Fitzroy. Didn't she tell me with her own lips enough to set me against him all the days of my life?"

"What did she tell you, my dear?"

"Oh, Jasper, that man ought to be tarred and feathered. He's treated her shamefully. Before he came after me at all he promised to marry her, which certainly he owed it to her to do; then he got into his head that I had money, or was to get money; he told Kate so the day she broke off the marriage. He was brute enough to say that I was so sickly that I would not live many months in anybody's way, and that when I was gone and he was a rich widower then he could make Kate his wife and live like a prince. Kate may have done wrong; poor soul, in many ways, but she wasn't the wretch that could let him do that, so she came and told me. When he saw that it was all over between him and me he went off somewhere, and, to keep Kate quiet I suppose, wrote her a letter promising to go and see her on the twenty-sixth, that's to-day, poor Kate! She had that letter yesterday, and has been as gay as a lark ever since."

Mr. Jasper Blount knitted his brows impatiently.

"Hasn't Mr. Grey been to see her since he came home from London?" demanded he.

"No, indeed; and if that's what he's got to tell her when he does go I don't think he'll be in a hurry to go."

"Alice, that man deserves some punishment. I saw Mrs. Fitzroy this morning, and was forced to tell her the truth about James Grey's marriage. I think she'll go crazy. You had better go and take care of her, and get her to show you any of Grey's letters to her in which he has promised to marry her. If he should come to see her, go where you can hear what he says, and if he make her any more promises tell 'em to me. He ought to be forced to make some restitution to Mrs. Fitzroy, even if he had to part with the lady he has pretended to marry to do it. Kate has done you a good turn in getting you a husband; now's your chance to return the favour."

"Jasper, you have a kind heart," observed Mrs. Schmitz, admiringly, "and I'll do everything you tell me."

Shortly afterwards Mr. Jasper Blount left, his head sunk on his breast and his hands clasped behind him, plotting his future course.

He spent the afternoon in his modest lodgings, resting himself after his long journey and busy morning.

In the evening he called again upon Mrs. Schmitz to receive her report.

She had spent the day with Mrs. Fitzroy, who was prostrated by the violence of her emotions.

Nothing had happened except a visit from Mrs. Burr, the housekeeper at Crowlands. She came to tell Mrs. Fitzroy, excitedly, shaking as if she had the palsy, that Mr. Grey had brought home a wife. She said

she had been so excited about it that she couldn't come before to tell her poor, dear Kate.

Kate had nearly gone mad again, and it took two to hold her down in her bed.

Mr. Blount ordered Mrs. Schmitz to her post on the morrow, and retired.

He was at the railway station the first thing in the morning, waiting for the London train.

He had lain awake most of the night planning how to circumvent Mr. Grey.

Grey was a villain, Rose was an angel, and Kate Fitzroy was an injured woman. Grey deserved to suffer torments, and should suffer them if Jasper were able to arrange them for him.

Grey should lose Rose, and be forced to take Kate. Mrs. Lester should play the game, since she was the only player to be admitted.

Mr. Blount hugged himself on the beautiful impregnability of his position, and strutted about the station smirking.

He was sure he had his enemy this time.

Up steamed the London train, and out stepped Mrs. Lester and Harry Winchester.

Mr. Jasper Blount worked his way through the crowd with vicious elbows and energy.

"Oh, there's Mr. Blount!" cried the old lady, in an eager tone.

She was clinging to Harry's arm, and looking as white as a sheet with excitement.

"Yes, I'm here, and I'm glad to see you too," blurted out Mr. Blount, seizing her hand, and transferring it from Harry's arm to his own. "But"—here he turned like a savage on his stepson—"who sent for you? What did you come for?"

"To take care of Mrs. Lester," stoutly replied Harry, "and to hear about Rose."

"Well, I've seen Rose, and she is alive and well. Be off now!"

Harry started.

"Father, I can't leave her to her fate. I must rescue her. I believe I'm going mad!"

"Acting exactly like it," snapped Mr. Jasper Blount. "Attempt to meddle with Rose's affairs and you ruin her. Keep away, and I may win the victory yet. Don't say a word, Harry; it is hard to endure, but for her sake, bear it. If any one can couple your name with hers after what took place on the twenty-fourth she's done for. Go away, Harry, and let those help her that can do it without injuring her."

Yes, it was hard for the hot young heart to bear, but for her sake he bore it.

Without another word he turned away, and, entering the booking-office, bought his return ticket for London.

In five minutes the down train carried him off. Then, and not till then, did Mr. Jasper Blount venture to leave the station.

He put Mrs. Lester into a cab, and conveyed her to his lodgings.

Not a word would he let her say until she was rested and refreshed.

Then he drew his chair close to her sofa, took her hand, and unfolded his plan. Having given her a brief account of all he had discovered, he concluded:

"Now, my good lady, you come in and perform a little easy part that will, if successful, checkmate Grey. He says he won't give up his wife; I say he shall. You say your husband is very ill and requires his daughter to nurse him. That's your excuse for going to Crowlands. You ask Mr. Grey to let his wife return to London with you. Mr. Grey refuses. You manage him so that he refuses before witnesses. Mrs. Burr, the housekeeper, will do admirably, being on Kate Fitzroy's side. You leave the house apparently defeated. To-morrow Mr. Grey must go to London to prosecute my son for assault and battery, confound him!"

"You and I wait till he is safely off. Then we go and get hold of Rose, and make off with her. We reach London, and send word to Mr. Grey that Mrs. Grey has broken his command on account of its cruelty, and has arrived to nurse her father. Mr. Grey makes his appearance, and demands his wife. She refuses to live with him, on account of his connection with Kate Fitzroy. He goes to law about it, during which time Rose is safe with her parents, Grey's time is wasted, and I am hunting out his true motives. Before the case is settled against Rose—as I have no doubt it will be, unless my silly sister-in-law finds out something useful from Kate Fitzroy—before the case is settled I may have discovered some of Mr. Grey's plots that may put him in my power. You see the pretty completeness of the thing? Well, you are to play the first move, and you understand all that depends upon it, don't you? Of course. You are a brave woman where your child's welfare is engaged; you'll do capitally. Off with you now. Call first at Mr. Grey's office, and if you find him there make your request before some of his clerks. If you have to go to Crowlands, make it before Mrs. Burr;

and if you should see Rose, don't do anything rash that may set Grey on his guard."

In a few minutes Mrs. Lester was driving alone to Chudleigh Heath.

CHAPTER XVII.

Such duty as the subject owes the prince,
Even such a woman oweth to her husband.
Taming of the Shrew.

Mrs. Lester alighted from her modest conveyance in front of the imposing mansion, and gazed about her wonderingly.

"How very wealthy he must be!" mused she. "What could have been his motive in stealing my poor Rose?"

Having rung the bell, a magnificent footman in blue plush appeared, and regarded her over his nose.

"Is—is Mr. Grey in?" faltered Mrs. Lester, feeling much crushed by the glory of her daughter's footman.

She knew beforehand that he must be in, having learned that he was not yet at his office.

"Step in, ma'am. What name?" inquired the splendid person.

"I'll just wait in the housekeeper's room," observed Mrs. Lester, quietly. "Tell Mr. Grey that Mrs. Lester is here."

The footman repeated the name in his most stylish accents, and, with eyebrows elevated, conducted the plain old lady into Mrs. Burr's parlour, where Mrs. Burr sat stonily mending a lace curtain.

The mild-faced visitor sat down near her and watched her for a minute very anxiously.

She had such a deal to ask her that she did not know where to begin; and the automaton-like movements and the freezing apathy of the old housekeeper did not invite confidence.

At last Mrs. Lester found voice, and hurriedly said:

"Is Mrs. Grey well?"

The automaton nodded, and went on stitching.

"You are sorry for Mrs. Fitzroy, aren't you?" abruptly inquired Mrs. Lester.

Mrs. Burr dropped her work, and stared at her in astonishment.

"Who are you, ma'am? and what do you know about me and Mrs. Fitzroy?" she whispered, in a hoarse voice.

"I'm Mrs. Grey's mother, and I'd give all the world to have it proved that Mrs. Fitzroy had the right to be in my daughter's place," cried Mrs. Lester, earnestly.

Mrs. Burr's thin, sour lips trembled violently, her eyes seemed lit by torches. She pressed her thin hands together in amazement.

"You're willing to give up all this fine house and lands from your daughter to—Mrs. Fitzroy?" she cried, "and to call your daughter's marriage a make-believe?"

"Yes—yes, and if you can help me to do it, oh, think Mrs. Burr, what it is to see a daughter's heart broken!"

Mrs. Burr suddenly put her finger on her lip and glanced meaningfully at the door.

It was slowly opening, and in the silence which ensued Mr. Grey, with a cruel amusement in his eyes, stepped in.

"How do you do, Mrs. Lester?" politely inquired he. "Unintentionally I overheard some of your conversation as I approached. I was not aware that Mrs. Burr was a partisan of Mrs. Fitzroy. Mrs. Burr is very foolish. Don't put any faith in Mrs. Burr, Mrs. Lester; for she has enough to do to look to herself. Will you come into another room, madam?"

Mrs. Lester could not repress a quick little shiver of fear at the man's calm boldness. He seemed so to defy all their efforts against him that it was impossible to startle him.

She refused to go to another room, and requested Mrs. Burr to remain.

Mr. Grey carelessly assented, but remained standing to mark his disapprobation of this interview in his housekeeper's precincts.

As for Mrs. Burr, she had blanched as white as death and scarcely ventured to breathe in her master's presence.

"Mr. Grey, I have come on a painful errand," said Mrs. Lester, beginning her well-counselled lesson. "Mr. Lester is dangerously ill from grief for the loss of his daughter, and I wish to ask your permission to take her home with me for a short time until he recovers."

Mr. Grey's eyebrows worked; he regarded her with a sardonic smile.

"How very sad!" exclaimed he, in tones of polite regret. "He has been left then without either daughter or wife. The danger must be extremely urgent."

Mrs. Lester's meek eyes flashed with indignation, but she bravely restrained herself and let the insult go by.

"I knew it was a great risk to leave him to a hired nurse," returned she, mildly, "but I could not bear to hear him calling for Rose so incessantly, sir. I beg you will let her come."

Tears filled her eyes for the moment, her heart was in the request, although she knew that if he granted it an important part of Mr. Jasper Blount's scheme would be thrown out.

What then were her feelings when Mr. Grey coolly replied:

"We will leave it to Mrs. Grey herself. If she desire to go she shall do so. Mrs. Burr, request Mrs. Grey to step down here."

In dead silence the pair waited the entrance of Rose.

Mrs. Lester was sick with the agony and joy of seeing again her darling; for the life of her she could not have spoken one word.

Almost immediately the door opened and Rose came in.

She stopped on the threshold at the sight of her dear mother, and a wild cry broke from her in her first surprise. She ran a few steps forward, as if to throw herself into those outstretched arms, when the low, cold voice of Mr. Grey arrested her midway.

"Wife," said he, "don't agitate yourself."

He took her hand, and with scrupulous courtesy led her to a seat as far apart from Mrs. Lester as the limits of the room would permit, standing on guard close at her side.

"Madam," said he to Mrs. Lester, down whose cheeks large tears were now rolling; "not intending my influence to be destroyed, I cannot permit my wife to mingle freely with those of her relatives who are disaffected towards myself. It is my desire to win the duty and affection of my wife, therefore I beg you will not interfere between us."

"Rose, Rose!" murmured Mrs. Lester, in tones replete with love. "My little daughter!"

Rose covered her face with her hands, and trembled from head to foot. Never a word did she venture though.

"Now, madam, look at my wife," said Mr. Grey. "do you find her weeping, ill-clothed, ill, or neglected?"

Mrs. Lester gazed at her poor Rose with her heart in her eyes.

Obedient to a hint from Mr. Grey, Rose turned her face towards her, with her eyes down, and a set smile upon her lips.

No, she did not look ill, or neglected, or ill clothed. She was richly attired in becoming robes, which were loaded with trimming; her neck, arms, and hands were glittering with superb jewels, and a mantling bloom was upon her cheeks, constitutionally rather pale.

Only by the fearful and anxious eyes could Rose have earned the title of unhappy.

"I do not understand that feverish glow in her cheeks," exclaimed Mrs. Lester, too much terrified by the slavish submission of her spirited Rose to control herself. "How is it, my darling? It is fearfully unnatural."

Rose was silent.

"Tell your mother the truth, my dear," quoth the soft-toned Grey.

"It is the change of air, Mr. Grey says," she replied, in a faint and terrified voice.

Mrs. Lester regarded her with a sickening sensation of terror.

Was her vile captor using some fatal drug thus to subdue the spirit of his victim? She almost believed it.

"My dear wife," said Mr. Grey, softly, "your excellent father is ill, and your mother has come to request you to go home with her and see him. Do you wish to go?"

The hollow and feverish eyes flashed a look of anguish at Mrs. Lester, the brilliant lips quivered convulsively.

The old lady wistfully returned the passionate glance.

But Mr. Grey's gleaming orbs seemed to attract those of his unhappy wife by a species of mesmerism, and, after a quailing glance at them, she wrung her hands and said, faintly:

"No; I do not wish to go."

Mrs. Lester uttered a frightened cry.

"My child! my child! are you going mad?" she cried. "Look up, Rose, for Heaven's sake, and tell me the truth!"

Rose only trembled and lowered her eyes.

"My dear lady," said Mr. Grey, serenely, "you see your influence has altogether given place to mine. That is as it should be, for by the time any outer influence is stronger than the husband's conjugal rights are apt to be infringed upon. However, since I see you are much distressed by my wife's fidelity to me I will console you by promising to take Mrs. Grey with me to-morrow when I go to London on business.

She will then avail herself of the opportunity to visit her father with my entire consent."

Violently startled, Mrs. Lester could only gaze at this fiendish man in consternation so marked that he openly enjoyed it.

If he had heard the whole of Mr. Jasper's plot he could not have more completely frustrated it.

He had foiled the attempt to convict him of cruelty to his wife's feelings, by consulting her on the spot.

He had foiled the hope of rescuing her in his absence, by offering to take her to London with him. He seemed invulnerable.

While these dismal thoughts flashed through Mrs. Lester's mind she was aware of the wild emotion which swept over her daughter's countenance at the news that she was to be permitted to see her father.

A passionate yet incredulous joy lit up her lustreless eyes, and she sedulously kept her face averted from the watchful gaze of her master.

Forced to compose herself, Mrs. Lester thanked Mr. Grey for his promise with grim formality, and rose to go.

"I would have been very glad to travel in your company, Rose," said she, sadly; "but your father is so ill that I must return to-night. Good-bye, my dear."

She resolutely passed Mr. Grey, and clasped her daughter to her breast.

She kissed her lovely cheeks and burning eyelids with yearning affection, and in the midst of loving words of endearment, managed to say, softly:

"My precious girl, don't come to London to-morrow, be too ill to travel."

A tight clasp of the hand showed that Rose understood, then Mrs. Lester relinquished her, said a shrinking adieu to Mr. Grey, and retired.

Mr. Jasper Blount's morning nap was disturbed by somebody twitching off his handkerchief from his face, and shaking him.

"Mr. Blount! Mr. Blount!" cried an excited voice. He bounced up from his arm-chair, and saw the agitated face of his ambassador before him.

"Ah, you're back?" queried he, cheerfully. "Well?"

"What do you think?" cried the old lady. "I asked him to let Rose come with me, and he called her down, and she was made to say she didn't want to come; then Mr. Grey said he would take her to London with him to-morrow!"

"What!" roared Mr. Jasper Blount. "Heaven be with us; the man's a sorcerer! Well, we're done! haven't a leg to stand on!" and he subsided into sepulchral epithets supposed to be applicable to James Grey.

Mrs. Lester wistfully added the words she had whispered to Rose.

Mr. Jasper brightened up dubiously. "She may make the trial," quoth he; "but ninety-nine to one he'll be up to her, and baulk her. However, I'll stay and watch to-night, and if James Grey should go off to London alone to-morrow morning, I'll go to Crowlands and abduct his wife; if he go in company with her to London, I'll dog 'em every step and abduct her from the hotel in London. Don't cry, my dear lady; crying won't make the case a morsel clearer. I thought such a spirited old lady was above that bosh. You feel that you'll never get back your child alive? Trash! what proof have you to show for that? Why must all women be so illogical? Come, come, don't; you'll only muddle your head; here, drink some water, it will stop the fit."

But all the philosophy in the world could not prevent Mrs. Lester from giving way to a hearty burst of grief at that moment of disaster, for wasn't her heart bound up in her pretty, good, dear Rose, who was made miserable for life?

Talk of freeing her? Pshaw! as soon might one hope to melt the nether millstone as the heart of that horrible man James Grey. Without his consent Rose's fetters could never be loosed.

In half an hour Mrs. Lester was posting back to London to take care of her husband, while Mr. Jasper Blount remained in Schofield to look after Rose.

It was a forlorn hope to depend on the chance of Rose being permitted to stay at Crowlands in her jailer's absence, but Mr. Jasper Blount was never the one to accept a defeat until it was indisputably his; and he had lost his dry old heart to the sweet and hopeless girl who so nobly had loved his Harry.

(To be continued.)

AN UNIQUE RAILWAY.—There is a wonderful bit of railway being made from Meatra to behind the island of the Guidecos, to a point nearly even with the Dogana. It is a private enterprise of several merchants to convey merchandise from the East and elsewhere direct to Meatra (the mainland), to forward it to the interior of Italy, without the labour of unloading and taking it in barques to the present station. The railroad is being constructed on piles across the Lagune. The work shows the desire of

the Venetians to avail themselves of the opening of eastern communication by Suas to increase their importations.

THE PERILS OF THE JUNGLE.—A few days ago information was given that a man-eating tiger was prowling about the jungle near Poughaghur Hill. Two gentlemen went out after the brute with a firm determination to "bag him," as he was said to have killed six men and a boy very recently. The gentlemen were Captain Westmacott and Mr. Little, the executive engineer P.W. Department, Kaira. They roused the animal (which turned out to be a large panther) at or near a village called Jowara. They fired at him and he fell—dead as they imagined; but when they got up to him he suddenly made a spring at and bit Captain Westmacott about the hand and wrist. Making a second bite, the panther retained hold of the forearm. Captain Westmacott, with the arm that was at liberty, kept "punching" the panther about the head to make him let go, and Mr. Little, rushing up, took the brute and shook him by both ears, and kept shaking till he made him let go. Then, hurling the brute aside, he killed him. The natives all say the captain will be well soon, because the panther was killed.

BRITISH ARCHEOLOGY.

At the last meeting of the British Archeological Association, in Sackville Street, London, Thomas Wright, Esq., M.A., F.S.A., in the chair, a paper was read by John S. Phené, Esq., F.G.S., F.R.G.S., Member of the Association, on the ancient pottery of the earliest inhabitants of these lands.

The table was occupied with sepulchral and other urns of archaic British manufacture, to illustrate the subject, in the discovery or identification of all of which Mr. Phené had been instrumental. Specimens from Argyllshire, Ayrshire, and Roxburghshire, in the north, were compared with some from Cambridge, Ely, and Berkshire, in the south, and the habits and customs of the people in those different localities treated by comparative description, as judged of by the physical features of the respective neighbourhoods, and the earthworks and other archæologia traceable to the same race. Among the examples, the British cist and its contents of pottery, bones, flint scrapers, and quartz, discovered last November on the estate of W. O. Rutherford, Esq., of Edgerston, at Lanton Mains, and the cist-vase, with large urn—exhibited under the process of restoration—which was found, filled with caldron bones, on the estate of the Marquis of Lothian at Old Jedworth in February last, represented this locality.

An interesting discussion followed, and a vote of thanks to the author of the paper was proposed by the celebrated palæographer, W. H. Black, Esq., F.S.A., notwithstanding that he objected to the acceptance by the author of the commonly recognised names of some of the places referred to, and the vote being duly seconded was carried unanimously. Amongst those who expressed an interest in the paper was H. Syer Cumming, Esq., F.S.A., Scot. Vice-President. Edward Roberts, Esq., F.S.A., Secretary, requested the paper to be handed to Edward Leven, Esq., M.A., F.S.A., of the British Museum, who accepted it for publication in the "Quarterly Journal" of the Association.

Mr. Phené is at present engaged in studying records of British antiquities in the Bodleian Library, and examples in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, in connection with the highly interesting ancient British settlement at Standlake, near Oxford, and the British works in Berkshire and Wiltshire, preparatory to his farther investigation of our highly interesting neighbourhood. A collection of illustrations of the examples are exhibited by Mr. Phené in the International Exhibition at Kensington.—*The Jedburgh Gazette.*

TREASURE TROVE.—An interesting discovery has been made near Holler, in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg. A workman of that place found, about a fortnight ago, no less than 378 Roman coins, besides several urns, not far from the village and only a few feet below the surface of the soil. The coins belong to the reigns of Vespasian, Domitian, Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, Antoninus, Aurelius, Commodus, Divus Verus, Diocletian, Diva Faustina, Chrispina Augusta, etc. The present possessor of this treasure, Pastor Bernard, of Wilverdingen, intends to dispose of the greater part of it at a fair price.

EXTRAORDINARY MIRAGE.—A mirage occurred at the mouth of the Forth on Sunday, May 21. The weather was remarkably warm, and in the afternoon there was a dull, deceptive haze. The sea presented almost the appearance of a mirror, and the vessels upon it seemed to have a double reflection from the sea and the background beyond. At one time the masts and rigging seemed elongated to four or five times their natural length, and then in the course of a few minutes they were reduced so as to be scarcely visible. At other times the vessels appeared

to be sailing double—one ship in sea and one in air. Extraordinary appearances were assumed by the May Island, which rose and fell and changed to various shapes in the course of a few minutes. At one time it appeared a perpendicular wall, rising to the height of several hundred feet, and shortly afterwards it appeared to be flat on the surface of the sea. All the other objects which came within the range of the refraction underwent similar changes, and the illusion lasted in differing phases for several hours.

AN EVENTFUL MONTH.

THE month of May, if not the "merriest, maddest" month of all the year, has always been an eventful month in the annals of France.

On the 30th of May, 1431, Joan of Arc was burned at Rouen; on the 14th of May, 1610, Henri IV. was murdered by Ravalliac; on the 23rd of May, 1706, the French were defeated at Ramillies; in May, 1756, began the Seven Years' War; on the 10th of May, 1774, died Louis XV.; the 5th of May, 1789, was the date of the opening of the States-General; on the 12th of May, 1793, Madame Elizabeth was executed; on the 12th of May, 1796, Babouf's conspiracy was suppressed, and in May in the following year Piegru's conspiracy failed; on the 19th of May, 1802, the "Legion of Honour" was instituted; on the 22nd of May, 1803, war was declared against England; on the 26th of May, 1805, Napoleon I. was crowned King of Italy; on the 5th of May, 1806, Charles IV. of Spain and his son abdicated in favour of Napoleon, and on the 27th of the same month commenced the insurrection in that country.

In May, in the following year, Napoleon entered Vienna; on the 3rd of May, 1814, the Bourbon dynasty was restored and Louis XVIII. arrived in Paris; and on the 4th of that month, in the same year, Napoleon arrived at Elba. On the 5th of May, 1821, Napoleon died at St. Helena; on the 16th of May, 1830, the Chamber of Deputies was dissolved three months before the abdication of Charles X.; on the 20th of May, 1834, died Lafayette; on the 8th of May, 1837, Louis Philippe being on the throne, an amnesty was granted for political offences; and in the same month Louis Napoleon published his "Idées Napoléoniennes;" on the 20th of May, also in that year, Talleyrand died; on the 25th of May, 1846, Louis Napoleon escaped from Ham; on the 7th of May, 1848, the Provisional Government resigned to an Executive Commission elected by the National Assembly of the French Republic; on the 15th, the people's attack on the Assembly was suppressed; and on the 26th, the perpetual banishment of Louis Philippe and his family was decreed; on the 15th of May, 1855, the Industrial Exhibition was opened at Paris; on the 12th of May, 1859, France having declared war against Austria, the Empress Eugénie was appointed Regent, and the Emperor Louis Napoleon arrived at Genoa; on the 21st was raised a loan of 20,000,000 francs; on the 20th occurred the victory of the French and Sardinians at Montebello; and, on the 30th and 31st, at Palestro. On the 22nd of May, 1864, died the Duke of Malakoff; on the 3rd of May, 1865, the Emperor visited Algeria; on the 6th of May, 1866, at Annecy, His Imperial Majesty expressed his detestation of the treaties of 1815; and we all know too well what has happened in May, 1871.

It is reported that Earl Spencer, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, will inspect most of the militia regiments in training this year. A most judicious arrangement in every way. There is no doubt that the Irish militia regiments will come well to the front.

DECREASE OF THE AGRICULTURAL POPULATION.—The fact, so generally indicated by the census of 1871, that population is declining or stationary or at all events is not increasing in the purely agricultural districts of England, has not failed to attract attention, but we have not noticed any satisfactory attempt to trace the various causes of this falling off in the number of people employed in the labours of agriculture. The census just taken will probably show an increase of not less than two millions in the last ten years, but agriculture will have had no part in this increase. The increase has been absorbed by trade and manufactures, and represents non-agricultural occupations.

THE ROYALISTS IN FRANCE.—We are beginning to hear of movements in favour of the exiled princes both at Paris and Versailles. The *Tricolor*, a new paper, advocates the claims of the Duc d'Anjou as President of the Republic; whilst the *Paris Figaro* is convinced that France can only be "finally saved" when the Count of Chambord and the Orleans Princes, "united by fusion, will afford her the support of their devotedness and patriotism." This is exactly in accordance with the recent manifesto of "Henry V."

IMPROVEMENT IN COACH-BUILDING.—Mr. Walter Brodie has invented and patented a new method of

carriage-building, which, he tells us, is applicable to all the classes of traction vehicles, as well as carriages in the ordinary meaning of the term. He constructs the framework of the body entirely of light angle iron; and this framework is covered with sheets of vulcanite, which is a material composed of india-rubber and sulphur, such as is now largely manufactured in Edinburgh and Manchester. The iron framework, springs, etc., are also vulcanised, to prevent corrosion. The process, should it be found to succeed, will no doubt supersede to a large extent our present expensive mode of constructing carriage panels and roofs, in fact will do away with the necessity of painting and varnishing altogether, since the more vulcanite is rubbed and polished the finer the surface it presents. A great reduction of the original cost is expected, and, which is probably of greater consequence, a saving in the outlay for repairs and redecoration.

TRESSILIAN COURT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A Life at Stake," "The House of Secrets," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XLIII.

ONE of the loneliest and dreariest of the Cheviot Hills in Northumberland is the one known as Bleak Mountain. It is grim and bare, save for patches of stunted pines and Northern firs and an extensively planted shrubbery.

At the foot of Bleak Mountain clusters the small hamlet of Gloomvale, already described to the reader upon the occasion of Jasper Lowder's visit to the neighbourhood.

Upon the flank of the mountain, and a mile distant from the village, is situated the lonely old farmhouse belonging to Guy Tressilian, in whose dreary solitude Jasper Lowder had immured his wronged young wife and her boy.

The road, rough and rugged, winds up from Gloomvale across the moors, past Gloom Fell, and yet more steeply up the mountain side to the very summit of the elevation.

Upon this lonely summit, like a crown, stands the solitary mansion known as Bleak Top. It is an old stone building, of rambling proportions, two storeys in height, and having a tall, steep, overhanging roof ornamented thickly with projecting dormer windows; its chimneys standing from the roof in clusters. The house is plainly built, but its appearance is hospitable in the extreme.

It had been a favourite shooting-box with the late Mr. Bymple, the father of Olla, but had been unused since his day, having been for years under the care of an elderly woman and her grandson.

In its rear, at a little distance, is a group of out-buildings, including stable, cow-house, and hen-house. These complete the appendages of the little estate, which comprises nearly the whole mountain. Gloom Fell is the only house besides Bleak Top on the mountain, and Gloom Fell is more than a mile distant.

The snow was falling fitfully, and the wind was sweeping the rugged face of the country in chill gusts, upon the wild December morning when Olla Bymple and Mrs. Popley, Sir Windham Winn and Guy Tressilian, alighted from the train at Alnwick, on their way to Bleak Top.

As Jasper Lowder had done, on the occasion of his visit to the same place, they proceeded first of all to an hotel, where they procured a hot breakfast, and ordered a post-chaise to be got ready immediately.

Tressilian, under the influence of medicine, was able to walk, leaning upon the great surgeon's arm. He was looking very ill. His face was pale as death, save in the cheeks, where a hectic flush burned fitfully. He had slept well during the night, thanks to narcotics, and seemed to be little worse for the noise and jar of the railway, but it was evident that the constant excitement in which he had lived since leaving Sicily was swiftly wearing him out.

"We must get him in bed as soon as possible," said Sir Windham, gravely, after having dressed his patient's wound and given him a suitable breakfast. "He cannot bear up much longer. His wound is in a highly inflamed state. The operation should be performed to-day, to secure a chance of success."

At this juncture the post-chaise was announced, and the party, wrapping themselves well against the piercing cold, descended to take their places in it. A supply of tin hot-water cans and woollen wraps promised to mitigate the coldness of the weather. The curtains of the vehicle were closely buttoned down to keep out the gusty wind, and the driver, enveloped in a cloak of many capes and muffled closely about the head and ears, mounted to his box.

The journey proved a hard one. Despite their precautions, the wind crept into the vehicle, and the cold came with it. Tressilian sank into a lethargy and scarcely moved, and did not speak once during

the drive. Sir Windham was loud in his complaints; Mrs. Popley shivered continually; and even patient, brave little Olla found the exposure almost beyond endurance.

At Alnham they stopped to warm and refresh themselves. Sir Windham ordered hot, spiced drinks for all except his patient. The tin cans were refilled with hot water, and the travellers resumed their journey.

Soon after eleven o'clock the post-chaise rattled up the narrow, stony, single street of Gloomvale. Passing through the hamlet without stopping, the party pushed on for Bleak Top.

The wide and windy commons were covered with a foot of snow, and the flakes were still falling. Olla wiped the wet window-pane with her handkerchief, and, pressing her face against the glass, looked out upon the dreary scenery.

As the vehicle laboured heavily past the old farmhouse of Gloom Fell the young girl noticed the smoke from its chimneys, and saw at the parlour window a patient, girlish face beside that of a rosy, laughing baby.

Hester Lowder and her boy were watching the snow-flakes and the gambols of the wind.

"Has Gloom Fell a new tenant, I wonder?" exclaimed Olla, at once interested in the young mother and her child. "Old Mrs. Tooker has no children. I know all about the tenants of Gloom Fell, for I came often to Bleak Top in my early childhood. Gloom Fell is the only house on the mountain besides Bleak Top, and it is owned by a Tressilian, one of the Tressilians of Tressilian Court, in Gloucestershire."

"Is it indeed?" said Sir Windham. "Sir Arthur Tressilian's son and heir has lately returned from a long residence abroad, I hear. I know Sir Arthur well. It is a fine old family, that of the Tressilians!"

The concluding mile of travel seemed farther than all that had preceded it. The road was steep and rugged, the snow was piled at various points in drifts, and in exposed places the wind assailed them so fiercely that the horses could with difficulty maintain their footing.

But at last they turned into the home grounds of Bleak Top through wide, open gates, and proceeded by a drive between two long rows of firs towards the gray old stone house. As they reached the porch the house door was flung open, and Popley came running down the steps to give them welcome.

"I did not think you would venture farther than Alnwick to-day, Miss Olla," exclaimed the faithful fellow, opening the chaise door. "The weather is terrible; and the prospect is that it will be still worse."

He gave his hand to his young mistress, who sprang lightly out. Mrs. Popley followed more slowly. Then came Sir Windham Winn, who had succeeded in arousing Tressilian from his stupor, and now gave his patient his arm and led him up the steps.

Olla hurried on in advance, but paused at the threshold to say:

"Popley, take the horses round to the stable, and see that they are well cared for. Then take the driver into the kitchen and give him the best of food and drink that the house affords. He will remain at Bleak Top till to-morrow."

Popley obeyed, mounting the box beside the well-pleased driver, and hurried the horses to the stable.

Olla opened the house door, and entered a long, well-lighted hall, the bare floor of which was finely polished, and a great wood fire shed warmth and radiance around.

Off this hall opened a drawing-room, into which Olla led her guests, while Mrs. Popley set out to discover the guardian of the house and her grandson.

The drawing-room comprised two snug apartments, with folding doors between. These doors were now opened, throwing the two rooms into one. In each room, upon a broad and cleanly hearth, a genial wood fire was burning. The walls of the double room were low, and wainscoted to the ceiling. The windows were plentiful, though narrow, and set in a diamond-shaped lattice. The curtains were of white muslin, freshly washed, and looped up with red ribbons. The carpet was faded, but in excellent repair. The furniture, that morning released from swaddling-clothes of brown holland, in which it had been invested for years, looked fresh and almost new, its upholstery of green reps being unfaded. The room was light, warm, and pleasant, a very haven of refuge to the cold and wind-beaten travellers.

Sir Windham Winn employed himself in removing his own and Tressilian's wrappings; Olla tossed off her hat and jacket, and set out to find Mrs. Popley and the old care-taker of the house.

Crossing the great, warm, draughty hall, and traversing a cozy dining-room, Olla found herself at the door of the housekeeper's room. Mrs. Popley and the housekeeper were standing before a fire in earnest conversation, but both came forward at the

entrance of the young mistress of Bleak Top, the housekeeper courtesying profoundly.

She was an elderly woman, tall and gaunt, but with a pleasant, honest face. Her name was Mrs. Kipp, and in his day her husband had been butler in the household of Olla's father. Upon the death of her husband the widow had been given a home in this bleak region, and here she had since lived with her grandson.

"You're welcome to Bleak Top, Miss Olla," she exclaimed. "Ah, how you have grown since I saw you last, my bonny young lady. This is no season to enjoy the mountain air. It is dreary here on the border in the winter time, but we'll try to make the old house pleasant to you, Miss Olla."

"I have not come here for enjoyment, Mrs. Kipp, but for safety," said Olla, with a winning smile, as she extended her hand. "I want you and your grandson to remain here. Mrs. Popley will tell you why I came. Now I want you to show me the guest-chambers. We have brought an invalid with us, and it will be necessary to get him to bed at once."

Mrs. Kipp had already heard something of Tressilian from Popley, and now hastened to conduct her young mistress through the dwelling.

She led the way to the main hall, Mrs. Popley following, then to the staircase hall. They ascended to the upper storey. Here a long, well-lighted corridor, through which draughts of wind were scourging, divided the floor. Upon either side chambers opened.

At their left were three bedrooms communicating. All these were pleasantly warmed. One of them had been arranged by Popley for the use of Tressilian, a second for Sir Windham Winn, who would remain one night at Bleak Top, and the third was intended for the occupancy of Popley himself, who intended to constitute himself Tressilian's nurse and valet.

The rooms prepared for Tressilian and the great surgeon were fitted up with fresh curtains, fresh and well-aired bed linen, lounges, and easy-chairs. They were very inviting.

Olla was examining them when she heard Popley in the lower hall, and she exclaimed:

"I will have Mr. Lowder brought up immediately, Mrs. Kipp, and will then look at my own room. Where is your grandson?"

"At the stable, Miss Olla. He went out to help take care of the horses."

Bidding the two women await her return, Olla ran downstairs and announced to the surgeon that Tressilian's room was ready. Guy was lying upon a sofa, his strength quite gone. Sir Windham endeavoured to arouse him, but the lethargy enthralled him was too deep to be easily broken.

"We shall have to carry him up between us, Popley," said the surgeon, with a grave look in his eyes.

Popley obeyed Sir Windham's directions, and, with the surgeon's aid, carried Tressilian to the chamber that had been prepared for him. The women retired into the hall, and Sir Windham went into his own room, while Popley undressed the invalid and put him to bed.

"These are your rooms and Mrs. Popley's, Miss Olla," said Mrs. Kipp, throwing open the door of the chamber opposite Tressilian's. "Now, if you will excuse me, I will go down and see to the dinner: It will be served in fifteen minutes, as Mr. Popley ordered."

She withdrew, and Olla entered the chambers assigned her. They were three in number, adjoining each other. The third had been fitted up for Mrs. Popley. The others comprised a bedroom and dressing-room, and it was evident that Popley had expended his choicest skill in fitting them up in a manner suitable for his young mistress. The great brass fire-dogs, supporting burning logs, were burnished to a superlative degree of brightness. A hearth-rug, rescued on the previous day from a shroud of sackcloth, lay before the hearth like a bed of glowing flowers. The bed, a high and antique four-poster, was draped in snowy sheets, and white curtains hung at the windows. A lounge and an arm-chair added a look of delicious comfort to the whole.

"Ah, this is pleasant!" exclaimed Olla, with delight. "How home-like it all looks! And how many fires there are in the house!"

"Yes, Miss Olla. Mrs. Kipp was saying to me that the fires have been burning in every room since Jim came," answered Mrs. Popley. "The rooms were colder than Iceland, and damp too. The house is draughty as a barn. The roof leaks, and there's an inch of snow in spots on the attic floor. Mrs. Kipp, her grandson Kit, and my son, were up nearly all last night, putting things to rights. The carpets were sewed up in sackcloth, and the furniture was done up in bags. Mrs. Kipp would have met you at the door this morning, but that she had to see to the dinner, and Kit was too bashful to show himself."

Olla investigated her rooms, and made her toilette by brushing her hair and dress, and bathing her

wind-burned face. She then descended to the drawing-room, where she was soon joined by Sir Windham Winn, who had freshly attired himself.

"I know this house very well, Miss Olla," he observed. "I came here twenty years ago with a shooting party, by invitation of your father. This was a famous shooting-box in those days."

At this juncture Popley announced dinner. Sir Windham gave Olla his arm and conducted her out to the dining-room, where a little round table had been laid with covers for two. The table-cloth was fine and white, the silver burnished, the china and glass clear as crystal; while, best of all, there were roasted birds, fine bread, vegetables, omelettes, and other dainty edibles, supplemented with a bottle of crusty port and a decanter of sherry.

Popley waited upon the table, assisted by Christopher Kipp, a tall, sturdy, well-made young fellow, who seemed afflicted with an unconquerable bashfulness.

With the desert of apple-tart and oranges coffee was brought in. Sir Windham and Olla, left to themselves, talked long and earnestly, and Olla told her story, all her hopes, fears, and perils, to the great surgeon, whose interest in her became deeply excited.

"You think it possible that Mr. Gower does not know that you own Bleak Top?" Sir Windham inquired.

"He has never spoken of it, Sir Windham. He has not charge of my property, as I was left to the guardianship of a lady—the lady who became his wife. It was she who assigned me to his care. The land belonging to Bleak Top has been leased for many years. The house could not be let, and has been left in charge of Mrs. Kipp. I am quite sure that Mr. Gower does not even know of the existence of Bleak Top."

"It will be easy for him to obtain an inventory of your property," observed the surgeon, thoughtfully. "The bad weather will be a defence to you in case he succeeds in getting upon your track. I think you will be safe here for the present. You may depend upon my friendship and assistance should you need them, Miss Olla. Should Mr. Gower appear here and offer to molest you, send to Alnwick and telegraph to me at once. I will come at your call. I shall return to town to-morrow in any case, having patients to visit. I will consult a first-class lawyer, and see what steps are necessary to effect your release from the guardianship of Mr. Gower."

Olla thanked Sir Windham warmly, and they continued their discussion of the matter. A little later the surgeon went up to his patient, who had remained in charge of Popley. Tressilian was still in a stupor, his eyes closed, his breathing low and uneven. It seemed as if his lamp of life was burning dimly. Sir Windham felt his pulse. It beat faintly and irregularly.

The surgeon issued a few directions to Popley, who darkened the room, lighted candles, and proceeded to loosen the bandages covering Tressilian's wound.

After a long and close examination of the gaping hurt Sir Windham said, briefly:

"Look the door. We must go to work at once." Popley hastened to obey, locking the door.

Olla, in her own chamber opposite, heard the clicking of the bolts, and turned pale. She comprehended that the hour had come which should decide the fate of Tressilian—whether he should live or die; whether he should be an imbecile or regain the full possession of his intellect. Wrapping a shawl about her head and shoulders, she left her warm room and crept out into the cold, draughty hall, taking up her station near the door of Tressilian's room, convulsed with an insupportable anxiety.

How slowly the minutes passed! She could hear now and then the low tones of the surgeon addressing Popley. She could hear a sound occasionally, as of Popley moving across the chamber. But for these a dead silence reigned—a silence that might be of death.

The minutes lengthened into hours. The short December afternoon drew near its close. The wind rushed past the lonely old house of Bleak Top, rattling shutters, slamming doors, and tearing through the trees like some screaming demon. A strong, chill draught crept through the halls and corridors of the exposed dwelling. The glow of Olla's great wood fire reflected a red light against the opposite wall of her dressing-room, and stole gradually out into the corridor, where the girl sat like a statue, all her faculties concentrated in the one of listening.

The shadows were clustering thickly in the lonely hall, and the time was the gray, chill twilight, when a sound came from the sick-room that nearly froze the blood in the young listener's veins.

It was a low, wild moan, a wail of unutterable sadness—the quick, startled cry of one in the extremity of bodily suffering.

"He is dying!" breathed the girl, in a hushed whisper. "Dying! Oh, Heaven help him!"

She arose and tottered to the wide window at the end of the hall. She sat down upon the broad win-

dow-seat, where the snow lay thickly as it had drifted in through the crevices of the window-sash. Pressing her face closely against the frosty pane, she stared silently out into the night, seeing nothing of the sleet and storm, and hearing nothing of the wild winds.

She had been sitting there for a long time, silent as death, a wild, scared look on her young face, a strange expectancy in her dark eyes, and with the fine snow drifting in upon her slender figure and upon her garments like a thin shroud, when at last Tressilian's door opened, and Sir Windham Winn came out into the hall.

He looked tired and worn. He looked up and down the corridor, saw the silent figure in the great window-seat, and approached her with a weary step.

The girl turned her head slowly.

"He—he is dead?" she said, in a low, husky voice.

"Dead? Oh, no!" returned the doctor, cheerfully. "We have brought him safely through, Miss Olla. He is sleeping now, a regular, healthy sleep, yet one of perfect exhaustion. We have saved his life, with Heaven's help, and, better still, his reason! When he awakens some hours hence he will, I hope and believe, be in his right mind—in full possession of his intellect, his reason, and his memory. He will, in short, be himself again."

CHAPTER XLIV.

As the two men, Jasper Lowder and Jacopo Palestro, continued to approach the very tree against whose huge trunk Sir Arthur Tressilian was leaning, the baronet grew keenly apprehensive of discovery. He pressed closer against the tree stem, a deeper shadow among shadows, more silent than the leaves above him or the grass beneath his feet. Thus, in the still night and the darkness, he watched the conspirators, and waited for them to speak with an eagerness that was painfully intense.

What was the mystery about his supposed son? What was the secret between him and this sinister and mysterious foreigner?

These were the questions weighing heavily upon the baronet's mind. These were the questions to which he was determined to obtain an answer before he would yield into the hands of Jasper Lowder the whole future of lovely, innocent Blanche.

The two men came nearer; they passed the tree, quite unconscious of the eyes peering out from its shadow, and halted in the park path, at the distance of a few paces from Sir Arthur, and well within ear-shot of him.

"You have got the two thousand pounds with you, Milord Sir Tressilian?" inquired Lowder.

"It is near at hand," answered Lowder. "It is in gold, of course?" asked the Italian. "I do not like the paper money. It is but rags with writing upon it. Give me the yellow coin that rings when it falls. That is money the world over."

"The two thousand pounds are all in coin. I knew that you would have a prejudice against paper money."

"All in coin! It must be a fine sight!" cried Palestro, eagerly. "My fingers itch to get hold of it. Where did you get so much money in so short a time, signore, when last night you declared that you could not raise a sum so large?"

"It is my business whence I got it," said Lowder, sullenly. "Yet, stay—I will tell you. There is no need of squeamishness in the matter. I stole the money—from my father's safe. I robbed him."

The announcement seemed to startle Jacopo.

"He had the money in his safe last night. It was intended for the purchase of a farm. I stole the key of his safe from his chamber, and abstracted the money."

"He is no squeamish lad, this milord," cried Palestro, rolling up his eyes in admiration of his companion. "You should be a brigand, Sir Tressilian. But is not theft a crime? Why do you tell me of your guilt?"

"I should be the last person in the world to be suspected of the robbery," answered Lowder. "Even if you were to declare what I have told you, no one would believe you. You were seen about the grounds yesterday. Sir Arthur spoke of you as an ill-looking foreigner. Suspicion may be directed against you as the thief, if you be found hanging about the neighbourhood longer. If the money were found in your possession, you would be convicted of the robbery upon circumstantial evidence, and sentenced to penal servitude for twenty years, possibly for life. With the money therefore I give you a warning. Have a trap to convey you to Gloucester within the hour. Make all haste to quit England, and you will be safe. Delay, and you are lost."

Palestro's teeth chattered with an absolute terror.

Lowder's object in revealing to him the truth concerning the robbery had been to cause him to quit England immediately. He desired to make it plain to Palestro that he would run his neck into a noose should he venture to approach Sir Arthur Tressilian upon any pretext whatsoever. He meant to guard against any possibility of Palestro's treachery to himself, and his design was successful. The Italian

would not have dared to draw the baronet's attention upon himself for twice two thousand pounds, now that he comprehended the pitfall Lowder had dug for him.

"Yes, yes, milord," he said, shivering. "I will do as you say. I will go at once. Ah, what if I should be found here? Why did I remain at the inn in the village all day? Why did I not go back to Gloucester last night? I am in one trap. Peste! One thousand demons! What would Giuditte say to this? Give me the money, Milord Sir Tresolino, and let me go."

"One word, Palestro. Leave to-night and immediately, and I will guarantee your safety. Delay, and you are lost. Write me from Naples. Keep me informed every week, and you will find me true to my word. The day that finds me Sir Guy Tresillian I will remit to you a second sum of two thousand pounds."

"Thanks, signore; I will be true as steel. I swear that I will never betray you. I swear to be true to my word."

"That is well," declared Lowder. "Now for the money. Follow me."

He led the way along the park path, amid the dusky shadows. The moon, not yet at its full, had been hidden behind a bank of gray clouds all the evening, but now a few pale, watery beams struggled down through the rifts of the trees and played upon the figures of Lowder and Palestro, and dimly lighted the path they were treading. Sir Arthur Tresillian, keeping within the shadows of the trees, followed his unconscious guides.

Lowder led the way to the secluded spot where grew the hollow tree, in the heart of which he had hidden the stolen money. The two men and their unseen follower came to a halt at this spot. Lowder plunged his hand into the recess formed in the hollow trunk, and drew out the bag of gold.

"There it is!" he said, letting it drop heavily upon the ground. "Take it, and be off!"

"One moment, signore," answered Palestro, his cupidity overcoming for the moment his fears. "I will look at it."

He had a large black bag in his hand, formed of a stout skin. He unlocked this bag, and drew out a dark lantern. Reversing the slide of the lantern, a stream of light poured upon the bag of money, and upon the faces of the two men.

Palestro knelt on the ground and untied the string at the mouth of the money-bag, and plunged his hand eagerly within. Presently he brought into the light a handful of glittering coins. He examined them curiously. He rang them upon a stone near at hand, listening to their ring as to fairy music. With the suspiciousness of his kind he plunged his hand between the yielding coins, bringing treasure up from the very bottom of the bag.

"It's all right," he muttered, with a glowing look at the yellow heap. "All right. Thanks, signore. You will find me the most faithful of allies. You shall have tidings each week. I know where my own interests lie; and I shall be true to them."

He tied up the money, and thrust it into his capacious black bag, which he locked.

"Good-bye, signore," he said. "And good luck!"

He turned to depart.

The conversation, which we have translated into English, had transpired in Italian, but Sir Arthur had heard and comprehended it fully, so far as the words went. But the hidden import of the scene he could not penetrate. Why Lowder found it necessary to pay Palestro a bribe of two thousand pounds to insure his fidelity the baronet could not understand.

But he intended to know. He was a man of quick decisiveness. Therefore, as Palestro turned to go with the money Lowder had stolen the baronet stepped abruptly from the surrounding gloom into the circle of light caused by Palestro's lantern.

And there he halted, pale and stern, his arms folded across his chest, his rebuking, accusing eyes looking from one to the other of the conspirators.

It was a fearful moment for Jasper Lowder. A fearful moment for the scheming ex-scriver.

Lowder recoiled several paces, with a wild cry of amazement and terror. Palestro let fall his lantern and clutched his bag, glaring wildly into the surrounding gloom.

"You here?" gasped Lowder, in a husky, frightened voice. "You here?"

The baronet looked at his supposed son with an awful and accusing sternness.

"Yes, Guy," he answered, "I am here. I have heard all that has passed between you and your accomplice. I know that you are the midnight robber who plundered my safe. And now—what does this mean?"

Lowder could not answer. His tongue clung to the roof of his mouth. He stood appalled, a very statue of horror.

Sir Arthur turned his stern and terrible eyes upon Palestro in the same awful glance.

"In payment of what service have you received this money?" he demanded, in Italian.

Palestro's face turned a sickly yellow. He trembled in affright. He believed that he was about to be judged and sentenced upon the spot by this awe-inspiring being as an accomplice of Lowder. Gasping for breath, he looked helplessly at his employer.

That glance reminded the usurper that his stolen position, his wealth, honours, and intended bride even, were all at stake. He struggled with his terror and emotion, and regained a measure of his self-control.

He approached Sir Arthur by two or three paces, and stood before the baronet with head drooping low upon his breast, and with the aspect of a convicted criminal.

"Father," he said, in a low, choking voice, "I acknowledge my guilt. I stole the money from your safe. I know not what untoward fate has betrayed my secret to you, but I confess my crime!"

"Why did you rob me?"

"Because—because I owed this Italian the exact sum in your safe!"

"For what did you owe him?"

Lowder's head drooped lower still.

"It was a—gaming debt," he whispered.

Sir Arthur made a gesture of abhorrence. Again he turned his glance upon Palestro.

The Italian, who, in his capacity of conrier, had acquired a smattering of English, comprehended Lowder's statement, and hastened to corroborate it. "It is true, milord," he ejaculated, eagerly. "The young man owed me for a gaming debt, contracted at Naples. He was afraid milord his father would hear of it. I pressed him for the money, for I have a wife to support. I am a poor man, Sir Tresolino," he added, in a whining voice. "Two thousand pounds is too big a sum for me to lose. Young men will be young men."

Sir Arthur interrupted the fellow by a commanding gesture, and his glance returned to Lowder's face.

At the same moment the usurper made a quick, significant motion with his left hand, which had fallen to his side. The baronet did not observe the gesture, but Palestro both saw and comprehended it.

With a quick, serpent-like movement, taking advantage of Sir Arthur's averted gaze, he retreated into the surrounding shadow, his bag in his hand, and hurried away, bent upon securing his own safety and that of his basely acquired money.

The baronet almost immediately discovered his flight, but he made no effort to pursue him. A greater grief than that occasioned by the loss of his money weighed upon his soul. The lantern burned brightly upon the ground between Sir Arthur and Lowder. The latter continued to stand with downcast head, and the former continued to regard him with stern, accusing gaze.

At last Sir Arthur broke the terrible silence.

"A liar—a thief—a gambler!" he said, in a slow, strange, sorrowful voice. "And this is my son! This is the heir and latest representative of the honourable line of Tresillians! This is the pure, frank, honest, truthful boy I sent from me years ago! This the son I have loved as my own soul!"

Lowder trembled before the awful pathos of that voice and those words. He began to realise what a disappointment he was proving himself to the high-minded baronet. He had concealed his real nature and had played a part since his arrival at Tresillian Court; but, clever actor as he was, he could not always hide his real nature, nor could he always bend circumstances to his unscrupulous will. Now Sir Arthur was beginning to understand his real character.

"What shall I say?" cried the usurper, in a passionate voice. "I was thrown into temptation, and, like most young men in similar circumstances, I yielded. I gambled at Naples with that fellow—Ah, he has fled! I lied to conceal my folly and guilt. But I swear to you that I have gambled but this once. As for the money of which I have robbed you, you can let it go in this way instead of for a farm. Of course I must pay a debt of honour, and—"

"Of honour!" ejaculated Sir Arthur, scornfully. "You talk of honour? And that man, an imkeeper, a retired servant—perhaps an ignorant, low fellow, is your friend and creditor! A pretty debt of honour which is paid from the proceeds of a robbery!"

"I—I didn't look at it as a robbery," muttered Lowder. "It was to buy me a wedding gift. Besides, it would have been mine some day with the Tresillian estates—"

"More's the pity. I am sorry for my tenants that such a landlord is in store for them. I am sorry for my servants. Had I the power, I would alienate the estates from you and leave them to a stranger."

"I am no worse than any other young man," said Lowder, sullenly. "I am sorry for my errors, and I will try to amend them. Here at Tresillian Court I shall have no temptations to evil, but every incentive to do right. This one error stands alone. Can you not forgive and overlook it?"

"I can forgive it, Guy, but I cannot forget it," responded Sir Arthur, in a pained voice. "I am terribly disappointed in you. I fear that my confidence in you can never be restored."

"Would you crush me for a single fault? I am not so bad as you think. I lied and I robbed you in self-defence. I dared not tell you of the pressing need I had of so much money. You might give me another chance. You cannot rub out the fact that I am your son!"

"I would that I could! I would that you had died in your innocent boyhood. The fact that it is my own son who has so grossly deceived and cheated me makes the deceit all the harder to bear. Yet I cannot lose the father in the judge. Wounded to the soul as I am, I will give you a chance to retrieve yourself. And, Guy," added Sir Arthur, "you will understand, of course, that your marriage with Blanche must be postponed. I must understand your character better before I give my pure young ward into your keeping."

Had a chasm suddenly yawned before Lowder he could not have been more startled.

"That is not fair, sir," he cried. "The marriage day has been appointed, and the servants and villagers are all gossiping about it. You are not just to me. You will not give me a chance to retrieve myself. If my marriage to Blanche be postponed, I shall become desperate. I need her loving influence, her tender guidance. If you deprive me of these, you wrong me cruelly!"

Sir Arthur did not appear greatly moved by this declaration. The stern lines about his mouth did not relax or the deep sadness in his eyes soften.

"If I allowed Blanche to marry you at present I should wrong her yet more cruelly," he observed. "She is an orphan, committed to my guardianship by her dying father. I will make no effort to break your engagement with her, but I shall insist upon a postponement of the marriage for a year, at the end of which time I can judge better of your worthiness to become her husband."

Lowder's face became suddenly inflamed with wrath. His anger deprived him of his usual prudence.

"You want to put off the marriage to give yourself a chance," he cried, with a coarse sneer. "But so surely as you interfere between Blanche and me, just so surely will I betray your secret to her. What do you suppose Blanche will say when she hears that her guardian, the man she regards as her father, loves her? Ha! you didn't know I had read your heart so well! You didn't know that I had discovered your secret worship for your 'young ward'! You can judge whether Blanche will be likely to remain long under your roof after I have imparted my discovery to her."

Sir Arthur looked aghast, as well he might. A painful flush burned on his cheeks.

"And this man is my son!" he murmured.

"Your son and your friend," returned Lowder, with an affectation of penitence for his hasty speech. "Give me a chance, father; let my marriage go on, and I will respect your secret. More—I will forget it. Let Blanche decide whether the marriage shall be postponed or not. Surely she ought to have a voice in the matter."

Sir Arthur remembered that it was Blanche who had made known to him the guilt of his supposed son. He believed that Blanche had ceased to respect Lowder, and that she would decide to postpone the marriage. He believed that she would decide as he would have decided for her, and his secret would be saved from a coarse betrayal. Therefore he assented to Lowder's proposition.

"We will leave the matter to Blanche!" he exclaimed. "She shall do as she pleases."

With these words he turned abruptly away from his supposed son, and retraced his steps through the park to the Court. As he went, his grand face overspread with a look of awful desolation, he murmured again, in a broken voice, those words that sounded like the wail of a broken heart:

"And this man is my son! How have I deserved so fearful a punishment? What can have changed my once noble boy into this treacherous, false-hearted man? My burden is greater than I can bear!"

(To be continued.)

ARCTIC EXPLORATION.—A farther investigation of the geography and phenomena of the ice regions of the Northern frigid zone will be made in the summer of the present year. An American vessel, the "Polaris," schooner-rigged steam-tug, has left the port of New York, under the command of Captain S. O. Burdington, of Groton, Conn. A three years' voyage is contemplated; a crew of twelve picked sailors being engaged. The "Polaris" has boiler furnaces specially constructed for burning oil, so that in the regions of the seal and whale fisheries she will always have fuel at hand. A body of well-known scientific men will sail in her, and we wish them a prosperous voyage. Their return will be looked for with great interest.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. A. L.—We are not acquainted with the lady in question.

WILLIAM R.—You must make such arrangements as your own discretion may dictate.

INQUIRER.—You may find a book of the description you require at most of the railway book-stalls.

HORACE HENRY.—The Nelson monument in Sackville Street, Dublin, was erected in 1808.

G.E.—1. The pimples will disappear if the body be kept in good health by suitable exercise. 2. The hair appears to be of golden hue.

MAX.—General Todleben was the Russian general who kept the allies at bay before Sebastopol during the memorable siege.

G. M.—As an ordinary rule, yes; but if any special understanding existed by which it was agreed that the things were not given, but lent merely, then they must be returned when demanded.

J. F.—1. The handwriting is good because it is legible. It is peculiarly small and quaint. 2. We cannot tell you anything about the piece named by you as "The Vacant Cradle."

R. S.—The opinions we have previously given upon the merits of your effusions are not altered by the perusal of "The Shipwreck" and "The Unattached Beauties of our Land."

VOLAGE.—The orthography of course could be corrected, but the confusion of ideas and extraordinary nature of the similitudes divert your attempt of any claim to public consideration.

MISS Y.—It is impossible to comply with your request for your letter bears no address. Generally, the best way to procure the back numbers is to order them of the nearest news-agent to your residence.

THE LANCER.—Considering the term of service required when you must have joined the corps, we cannot perceive that your assertion of having retired from the army is likely to forward the views which have induced you to write to us.

WILLIAM PRESTON.—The sonnet is pretty, perhaps; it is certainly very like a nursery rhyme; yet there some music in the numbers which evokes a reminiscence of a glee or a part song. Some talented musical composer might possibly give the words an interest and importance which they do not now possess.

G. D.—There is a hopefulness about the lines in spite of the crudeness by which they are marked. The opening phrases are fairly good, but the transition from "A mighty forest" to a cosy cottage is too abrupt; and the merry laugh and hymn of praise, to each of which there is an appropriate time, are by you placed in too close juxtaposition.

F. J. G.—We cannot very well understand the drift of your letter, for there seems to be no necessity for privacy with reference to such an ordinary matter. We should, notwithstanding, be glad to indulge your harmless caprice and comply literally with your desire, were it not for the circumstance that the insertion of such a request would be generally calculated to convey an erroneous impression. We are therefore sorry that we cannot accommodate you.

T. S. (Belfast).—We can hardly see how you can hope to make the discovery of which you are in search, for the antidote to the grease must be something extraneous to the lithographic ink. You want, in fact, to manufacture such an ink without the aid of any oily or unctuous matter. That seems to be a difficult affair for some inventive genius to contrive his brains with. In reference to your eyesight, if no reform is needed in your mode of life, take the opinion in the first instance of some optician.

POLLY OF WAPPING.—Soldiers' or seamen's letters are subject to a postage of 1d. if prepaid and under half an annce; by private ship 1d. gratuity must be paid in addition. Letters from abroad sent by or addressed to soldiers or seamen, when unpaid are charged 2d. If sent to or through a foreign country they are liable to foreign rates in addition, but to no farther charge upon redirection. Letters from soldiers or seamen to the United States are subject to the United States' rate in addition to the usual reduced rate, the whole to be paid in advance when posted in this country.

EMILY.—The prophecy of Orval forms a very curious tract, and is now creating as much interest amongst the serious as it did in 1849, when it was reprinted in London in a cheap form. There is very good proof that it was first issued in the middle of the sixteenth century, and certainly it has forecast the troubles of France under the

first Napoleon, as well as those connected with the second empire, in a remarkable manner. The prophecy is divided into clauses, and amongst other things, you can now literally read the announcement of the destruction of the army that retreated from Moscow, which announcement was made, be it remembered, in the sixteenth century; and you can also perceive that the recent burning of Paris was plainly foretold. When it is remembered that this prediction has been in the hands of the London public for more than twenty years, having been issued by the late Mr. James Burns, of Portman Street, soon after the French Revolution of 1848, the interest which attaches to those portions of the prophecy which remain to be fulfilled is very great. We quite agree with your opinion as to the difficulty of defining precisely the way in which prophecy is to be fulfilled. It is our duty to set upon certain principles, to do the thing which is nearest to us, to take care that our own business is reasonable and proper, and to mind it. To be a star gazer or a quid nunc is very idle. Still, such a prophecy as that of Orval is worth a thought or two. After the burning of the city—which is taken to be Paris—no distinctly points to the reunion of Gaul under the leadership of one of the Capetian race. Then he foretells a very long period of great prosperity. After which he alludes to other troubles. By the reunion of Gaul many people understand the fusion of the elder with the younger branches of the house of Bourbon; or, as our current newspapers style it, the fusion of the Bourbonists and the Orleansists. This point very nicely illustrates the difficulty connected with unfulfilled prophecy. Gaul is to be reunited, says the prophet. How? We ask. We must wait until the reply is written in history. Yet are we amazed as, by the light of events which have since happened, we study the prophecy of Orval written at least three hundred years ago!

CUPID'S PLAIN.

Let me in, don't keep me waiting,

Waiting at the door;

I am weary, and, alas, lonely,

I can roam no more!

See, mine eyes in tears are swimming!

See my cheeks, how thin!

Let me in, don't keep me waiting;

Pray thee, let me in!

Let me in, my wings are dripping

With the cruel rain;

And my little heart is beating

With a tender pain.

All is chill without, and frosty—

All is warm within.

Let me in, don't keep me waiting;

Pray thee, let me in!

Let me in, oh, bashful maiden,

Beautiful and fair;

Some have entertained, you know it,

Angels unaware.

From the throng so cold and heartless,

From this world of sin,

Let me in, don't keep me waiting;

Pray thee, let me in!

M. A. K.

WIDOW STUMPY is rather too hard upon us. The bare enunciation of her age coincides indeed with the name she has assumed, but the meagreness of the description will fail to attract. In all probability she only wishes the epithet to apply to her stature. If so, it is unfortunate that the meaning of the word will not exactly carry out her intention, for stumpy signifies also hard, strong, and full of stumps. Now if she could authorise us to say that she is "fat, fair, and forty," with a comfortable home and income, there are probably many worthy mechanics of the description alluded to who will eagerly reply.

HISTORIAN.—1. The first English Duke was Edward the Black Prince. He was created Duke of Cornwall by his father, Edward III., in 1337, when he was seven years old. 2. The title of Marquis was instituted by Richard II., who bestowed it in 1389 upon his favourite, Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, and created him Marquis of Dublin. 3. The Baron titles of Alderman, or Eorl, and Thane were changed into Earl and Baron by William I.; but the word Baron had then another signification beyond its present one, for we read of the Barons of London as we still do of the Barons of the Cinque Ports. 4. Before the dignity of Viscount was bestowed upon any person in England it had long been in use in France. John Beaumont was the first to bear it in this country; he was created Viscount Beaumont and Count of Boulogne in France in 1440. 5. The order of Baronets was established by James I. in 1611, and exists only in the British dominions.

A. R., thirty, short, and dark. Respondent must be fair and amiable.

MAUD, seventeen, fair hair, and dark eyes. Respondent must be dark, young, and have black curly hair.

EVELINE, nineteen, fair, and pretty. Respondent should be a dark gentleman, tall, and handsome.

OLIVE, twenty, fair, blue eyes, and light hair. Respondent must be fair.

ALICE, eighteen, dark, and handsome. Respondent must be a fair young gentleman.

B. J., twenty-one, 5ft. 9in., fair complexion, a total abstainer, and in the Metropolitan Police. Respondent should be dark and a Roman Catholic.

JACK T. B., 5ft. 4in., good looking, light blue eyes, and fair complexion. Respondent must be good looking, fond of music and dancing, loving, and fond of home.

HAROLD, twenty, 5ft. 7in., good figure, dark complexion, and will have an income when of age. Respondent must be fair, pretty, moderate height, and a good musician.

LUCILLE, twenty, tall, fair, blue eyes, golden-brown hair, pretty, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, well educated, gentlemanly, not more than thirty years of age, and in receipt of a regular income.

BIDLO, fifty, tall, rather stout, of studious tastes, and in an excellent situation, seeks a suitable partner. Re-

spondent must be about thirty, ladylike, accomplished, loving, and domesticated.

PAULINE, nineteen, middle height, fair complexion, dark hair, blue eyes, good figure, lively, and loving. Respondent must have moustache, no whiskers, be dark, handsome, and fond of home.

AMELIA wishes to meet with a widower with a view to matrimony; he must be dark, of middle height, and about twenty-eight. "Amelia" is dark, good tempered, and twenty-six.

FRED W., twenty-four, 5ft. 7in., dark brown hair, moustache, whiskers, hazel eyes, good figure, and fond of home. Respondent should be dark, good tempered, affectionate, a good musician, and between eighteen and twenty.

KATIE and MARY.—"Katie," eighteen, clear complexion, dark blue eyes, dark auburn hair, lively, and loving. "Mary," twenty-one, clear complexion, dark brown hair, blue eyes, and cheerful. Respondents must be tall, dark, and loving.

AUGUSTUS, twenty-two, tall, dark, well educated, and of prepossessing appearance, feels that a suitable partner in life would fill up the measure of his contentment. She must be tall, good looking, lively, and accomplished—if with fair hair preferred.

A CABINET MAKER, twenty-three, 5ft. 6in., bumpy hair, loving, fond of home, and earning good wages at the West-end. Respondent must be about nineteen or twenty, rather stout, medium height, dark, loving, good looking, and fond of home.

UNCLE TOM, twenty-two, 5ft. 9in., light brown hair, slight moustache, good figure, good temper, and in a good position. Respondent should be about twenty, lovable, domesticated, slight, tall, have a light complexion, and be a good pianist.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

LORELY FANNY is responded to by—"Taranaki," 5ft. 5in., well proportioned, dark, passable, good tempered, hazel eyes, heavy moustache, steady, loving, and a total abstainer; and—"Frank W.," twenty-one, 5ft. 9in., dark, good looking, with an income of \$200, a year. JESSIE by—"A Sea Captain," 5ft. 7in., dark blue eyes, affectionate, and fond of music.

B. C. by—"Tarifa," twenty-four, a sergeant in the Line, good looking, musical, and a good scholar.

JUDY by—"R. W. B.," twenty-four, 5ft. 8in., a farmer's son anxious to settle in life, fond of home, and would give love for love.

LIZIE S. by—"Edwin," in the Navy, twenty, 5ft. 10in., fair, brown hair, blue eyes, and loving; and—"H. W.," a young sailor, twenty, 5ft. 6in., blue eyes, and very industrious.

AGNES by—"Julian," 5ft. 6in., dark hair, large gray eyes, and a good mechanic; and—"Bernard H.," twenty-two, 5ft. 6in., but not dark—would like to exchange cards.

HONEST and TRUE by—"Fanny W.," who can appreciate any one thoroughly "honest," and "true." She is twenty also, 5ft. in height, dark hair, black eyes, and a good musician.

SAUCY KATE by—"Harold," nineteen, a clerk in a City merchant's office at a progressive salary already quite sufficient to maintain a wife. "Harold" is tall, fair, well connected, educated, and good tempered. MISSIE and ENRIK by—"Joe Talbot," and "Harry Ormond," two friends and fellow clerks, each able to keep a wife and desirous of the opportunity to do so. "Joe" is tall, rather dark, young, and adores golden hair; "Harry" is also tall, with brown hair, eyes, and moustache. Both are educated and well off.

ALPHA by—"Hetty," thirty-two, dark, could give love for love, and would make a good wife;—"Primrose," thirty, rather tall, dark, domesticated, and would give love for love;—"Lonely Lottie," a widow, 5ft. 4in., fair, well educated, loving, and a good housekeeper; and—"Sally," thirty-one, 5ft. 4in., brown hair, blue eyes, cheerful, loving, and would make a kind, good man a good wife.

FLORA and ANNIE by—"John" and "Arthur," "Frederick," and "James," and "William" and "Henry," respectively. "John" is a steady mechanic, whose qualifications answer "Flora's" requirements; "Arthur" is a cheesemonger in a thriving business neighbourhood, and he is of opinion that his shop would become even more popular if "Annie" would bestow her presence upon it; "Frederick" is charmed with the name of "Flora," and feels that he could make her an affectionate husband; while "James" entertains like sentiments with regard to "Annie;" "William" and "Henry" are brothers, partners in an ironmongery firm, and are both tall, dark, and affectionate.

HELIOTROPE would like to hear farther particulars of "Ajax."

DIMAS wishes for farther particulars concerning "Anchor Jack."

PAUL COST has omitted to send particulars of his age and personal appearance.

MABEL C. has not stated the qualification she desires to find in the suitor for her heart and hand.

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Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. XVI. Price One Penny.

NOTICE.—Part 98, for JULY, Now Ready, price 7d., with large Supplement Sheet of the Fashions for JULY.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

†† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

EMBROIDERED TRIMMING, COLLAR, CUFF, CRAVAT END, NEEDLE CASES, MUSLIN EDGING, &c., &c.

TRIMMING FOR COLLARS, &c.—Nos. 1, 2, 7, & 8.
(Evans's Embroidery Cotton.)

ILLUSTRATION No. 2 represents a collar of mull



TRIMMING FOR CUFF.—No. 1.

muslin in embroidery. No. 7 shows part of the actual size. Work the twigs partly in flat stitch and partly in knot stitch. No. 8



COLLAR.—No. 2.

is worked in the same way, as also the trimming, No. 1.



CRAVAT END.—No. 3.

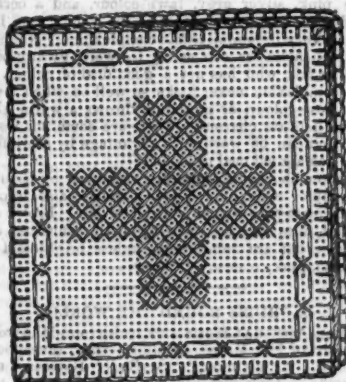
CRAVAT END IN EMBROIDERY.—No. 3.
(Evans's Embroidery Cotton.)

This is arranged medallion fashion, and consists principally of lace and Valenciennes edging. In the centre is a sprig of flowers embroidered on mull muslin. The joining on of the lace is concealed by a narrow strip of embroidery.

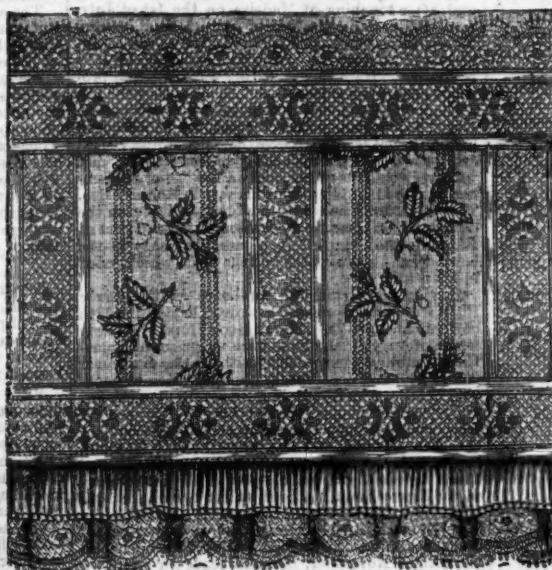
STICKING PLASTER CASE.—Nos. 4 & 6.

This case consists of two square parts of canvas

or paper, one surrounded with a silk edging in point Russe. The centre of the under part is adorned with a cross, and the other side bears the inscription "Love heals Wounds." Both are embroidered in red silk.



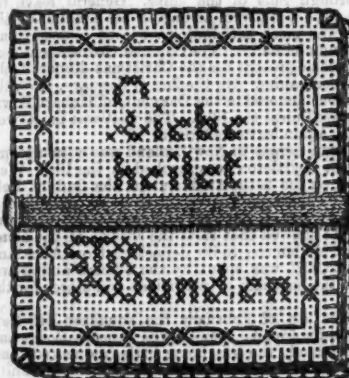
STICKING PLASTER CASE.—No. 4.



EDGING FOR MUSLIN DRESSES.—No. 5.

EDGING FOR MUSLIN DRESSES, PETTICOATS, &c.—No. 5.
(Evans's Embroidery Cotton.)

This edging is shown half the actual size, and consists of Valenciennes insertion and embroidery.



STICKING PLASTER CASE.—No. 6.

Introduce the strips of batiste according to illustration. These are trimmed with lace and batiste fringes.

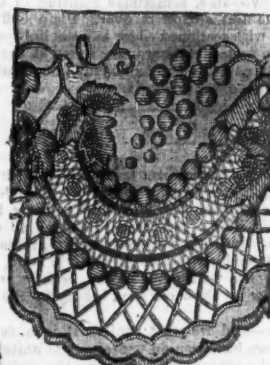
EMBROIDERED NEEDLE CASE.—No. 9.

Cut two pieces of cardboard in the shape of an octagon and cover them with embroidered cloth. On

one side work the date of the year in flat stitch. Let fine white silk braid be the material used, and edge both sides with stripes of gray silk. Let the fine white flannel leaves within have around them a narrow ruche of white sarcenet ribbon.

FASHIONS.

CRETONNE COSTUMES are the novelty of the season. These were introduced late last year at French



TRIMMING FOR COLLAR.—No. 7.

watering-places. They are intended for country wear only, and are made of the chintz-figured cretonnes used for upholstering furniture. The grounds are black, olive, dove, or light buff, with large, brill-



CUFF.—No. 8.

liant-coloured flowers and figures. They are made with a ruffled skirt and polonaise edged with white muslin platings, and caught up by large bows of black velvet.

PARASOLS.—The parasols used this year are umbrellas in size, large enough for protection against sun and shower. They are of silk or pongee, with merely a band of a darker shade bordering the edge, or else are deeply fringed. There is a fancy



NEEDLE CASE.—No. 9.

for white handles, either of enamelled wood or of polished bone or fine ivory. Straight smooth sticks are used instead of the fancifully carved ones of last year. Rosewood and partridge-wood sticks, with a knob or cross at the end, are also pretty. Cornelian handles are on umbrellas of blue and plum-coloured silk. Louise blue and purplish plum-colour are the favourite silk umbrellas with young ladies, especially

blondes, and are much admired with black or white snits. They are used on all occasions except for full dress. Dove gray and brown silk umbrellas are used by ladies of more quiet tastes. The serviceable pongees, twilled like serge, are shown in buff, brown, tan, white, and all the various gray shades worn for costumes. The lining in of any becoming colour, and the sticks are plain bamboo. Camel's-hair tassels ornament the top. These serge pongees may be scoured, but the plain foulard often sold for pongee is not serviceable, sometimes splitting in the gores before the first season is over. Plain buff cambric parasols with scalloped edges and silk linings are preferable to foulard, and are much used at the seaside. Black silk parasols with coloured linings are chosen by elderly ladies.

FASHIONS FOR JULY.

ALTHOUGH the present fashion relating to dress is so fanciful that twenty years ago a modern belle might have presented herself at a fancy ball—we had almost said a masquerade, we see no reason to despair of the future, nor to doubt that gradually good taste and good sense will go hand in hand, proving that this isle "with matchless beauty crowned" knows how to show off such beauty to the greatest advantage.

Of late—and we must confess it is a redeeming trait—there has been an endeavour to unite the useful with the ornamental. Witness the châtelines, so charming an addition to a young lady's toilette, and so suggestive of sensible occupation.

The bright steel châtelines attracting attention to the slight waist and the ceinture from which this châteline depends, give the idea of an excellent *ménagère*, who knows how to make constant use of the scissors and needles so well prepared for use, and so judiciously protected from the power of inflicting injury.

Did our fair readers know how great is the charm of domestic tastes for the other sex, they might come to the conclusion that the needle may be a more powerful conqueror of men's hearts than the pencil or the lute.

How charmingly the poet Cowper describes the effect on his feelings of the mere memory of his "Mary's" kind offices wrought by the needle! How touching are the following lines:

Those needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disused and slumber no more,
My Mary!
But all their threads with magic art
Have wound themselves around my heart,
My Mary!
For could I see nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would shine in vain for me,
My Mary!

But we must turn from the sentimental effect produced by the châtelines and needles to the question of changes in the world of fashion.

The bonnet still partakes of the character of the tower, and we must say it adds to stature, but diminishes attraction. The piles of material constituting the hat and bonnet have no power to soften or to shade. In fact, the fault we find with the modern *chapeau de femme* is that they impart to her a boldness that is anything but pleasing. On the other hand, dress—we mean the various costume-less pretensions, and more in accordance with the laws of proportion and common sense. The tunic and the body are often united. A great deal of liberty is allowed in the cut of the sleeve, and, whether tight or full, much trimmed or otherwise, there is not much danger of its being considered *rocooco*.

Veils are more ample, and fasten behind.

On horseback the habit need not necessarily be of cloth; nankeen or foulard may with advantage be substituted, and much suffering from unnecessary heat be avoided.

Now we turn to a subject not sufficiently considered—we mean the important one of the choice of colours in female attire, as suited to the complexion of the wearer. This is not sufficiently studied by our fair countrywomen.

We have seen a beautiful brunette, who in amber satin at night has been acknowledged the queen of the ball, look almost plain the next morning at a flower-show in a dark blue glacé or a bright green barège. Again, a lovely blonde, who in a white tulle ball-dress, trimmed with flowers and ribbons of the exquisite blue of the forget-me-not, has made conquests by dozens, has lost all the hearts she had won the night before by appearing at a *matinée dansante* or a garden party in orange-coloured grenadine, or laburnum-coloured glacé.

As a general rule delicate tints suit fair complexions, and rich hues set off dark beauties; and

yet, strange to say, white and black are generally becoming to both dark and fair; but the ribbons, flowers, and even jewels worn with the white or black lace, silk, or satin should be of colours suited to the wearer's complexion and hair. Mauve, light blue, pale pink, silver grey, fawn-colour, and a certain shade of green, namely, that of the young rose leaf, are all very becoming to fair complexions. No shade of green however can safely be worn by any lady, dark or fair, who has not a good deal of colour. A pale complexion never looks so well as when a soft pink, rose-colour, or geranium throws a warm glow on its delicate charms. There are some shades of blue that can be worn with advantage by a brunette who has a good deal of bloom.

Yellow should be especially eschewed by beauties with red or even golden hair; orange, also, is only becoming to pale women with dark hair. Brown and neutral tints can be worn by both brunettes and blondes, but are unbecoming unless brightened up by blue, pink, oiscean, or cerise.

A CRUISE ROUND THE WORLD.

READ-ADMIRAL HORNET's cruise round the world with six of Her Majesty's ships—the "Liverpool," "Liffey," "Edymion," "Seylla," "Barrosa," and "Phoebe"—took him 515 days from England, and he was at sea on the whole or part of 409 days.

He left Plymouth Sound on the 19th of June, 1869, and, after touching at Madeira on the 1st of July, reached Bahia on the 2nd of August, and, making his way under sail with light winds and calm, anchored in the harbour of Rio de Janeiro on the 10th of August. Here some refitting was done, and provisions were completed. In accordance with the request of the British Minister at the Brazilian Court, general leave was not granted. The emperor held a special levee to receive the officers, and visited every ship. On the 25th the squadron left Rio, met with very thick weather, and on the 6th of September anchored in the River Plate, off Monte Video. The "Barrosa" had a case of yellow fever on the passage, that of a boy who, attempting to desert at Rio, concealed himself in a merchant ship in the harbour, and there contracted the fever, which ended in his death.

Having completed the gunboats in the River Plate with provisions, the squadron left on the 11th of September for the Cape of Good Hope. Westerly winds of varying strength were experienced, sometimes enabling the squadron without steam to cover 250 to 260, and once 280, knots from moon to noon. The squadron anchored in Simon's Bay on the 3rd of October, and underwent a large refit. General leave for three days was given, and though many of the men had not had any since leaving England their conduct was so good that the Mayor of Cape Town expressed the satisfaction of the inhabitants to the Rear-Admiral. The squadron left on the 16th of October under sail for Melbourne; the passage was the most boisterous one that was experienced. Anchor was cast in Hobson's Bay, Melbourne, on the 20th of November. General leave for two days was granted, and too many of the crew never found their way back; the reception of the squadron was most hospitable and enthusiastic.

On the 7th of December Melbourne was quitted, and on the 13th Sydney was reached; the shores of the harbour were lined with dense masses of people, and a general holiday had been proclaimed. The squadron remained here thirteen days, and there was a thorough refit of the ships. General leave for three days was given, and again the conduct of the crews was most satisfactory, except in desertions, which numbered 27. The Colonial Government sent a handsome present for the Christmas dinner of the ships' companies. On the 2nd of January, 1870, the squadron anchored in the Derwent, off Hobart Town, and stayed until the 10th. The visit was most welcome. Again leave was given.

The run across to New Zealand was soon accomplished; Lyttleton was reached on the 18th, Wellington on the 24th, Auckland on the 2nd of February. Thousands visited the ships at these places, and the effect of the visit was excellent. A careful estimate showed that from the arrival of the squadron at Melbourne to its departure from Auckland about 23,937 was spent by the officers and crews, and in the purchase of provisions and stores for the ships.

On the 9th of February the squadron left New Zealand for Japan; between the Minerva Rocks and Ualan Island, the sea being little frequented, and said to contain unknown reefs and shoals, the ships occasionally had to be sailed at night in single column. They anchored at Yokohama, after a passage of 56 days. From 23 deg. south to 22 deg. north latitude the thermometer by day never stood below 80 deg., and generally was as high as 82 deg. to 86 deg. The squadron proceeded up the Gulf to Yeddo, and His Majesty the Mikado held a special levee to receive the officers. The leading members of the Supreme Council visited the flagship. At

the desire of the Japanese Government two Japanese naval cadets were received in the squadron for the purpose of acquiring some knowledge of naval service, and the internal economy of our men-of-war, the expenses being paid by the Government of Japan. One committed suicide while under monomania, the other made very satisfactory progress, and entirely adopted European customs. Sir Harry Parkes declared the visit of the squadron beneficial in a public sense.

The passage from Japan to Vancouver's Island was trying; bitterly cold, thick, and stormy weather was experienced. The calendar was altered on passing the meridian of 180 degrees by the intercalation of a second Tuesday, the 3rd of May. Esquimaux Harbour, Vancouver's Island, was reached on the 15th of May. Leave was given, with the usual result of some desertions, American territory being so near. The squadron left on the 28th of May, after refitting and taking on board invalids from the Pacific squadron for England. Honolulu was reached on the 16th of June, and quitted on the 23rd; the King of the Sandwich Islands paid a visit to the squadron. The equator was crossed on the 4th of July, and no steam being used Valparaiso was not reached until the 14th of August, after a most monotonous passage of 53 days, on 50 of which not a speck of land or a vessel was seen. While here, repairing and refitting, news was received of war having broken out in Europe, and orders came to return to England at once.

The squadron left on the 28th of August, and met unfavourable winds and heavy seas. Anchor was cast in Plymouth Sound on the morning of the 15th of November last, after a cruise of upwards of 52,000 miles in less than 17 calendar months. The foreign stations visited were reinforced with 264 supernumeraries carried out in the squadron, and several men were spared to fill up vacancies in ships met with. Time-expired men were brought home. The squadron was essentially one of instruction, and training received especial attention. Advantage was taken of every opportunity, in the fine weather passages, to exercise the squadron in fleet manoeuvres. The average number of persons borne was 2,695. 3,461 tons of coal were expended.

A FORMER Lord Mayor of London, Sir Thomas Harper, left two fields in Bloomsbury for the education of poor boys in Bedfordshire. At the time of the bequest the value of the land was 40*l*. a year. Now it is 80,000*l*., and at the end of the present lease it will be about 160,000*l*.

VELOCEPEDING.—100 MILES IN A DAY.—A few days ago Mr. B. Kent and Mr. Tilney, of Beccles, journeyed the extraordinary distance of 100 miles on velocipedes in one day. Starting from Beccles in the morning, they ran to Ipswich railway-station, a distance of 42 miles, in six hours and five minutes, including an hour and a half for stoppages on the road (an average speed of nine miles an hour). They then ran to Lowestoft, 46 miles, from thence to Beccles, 10 miles, thus making a total, including two extra miles in Ipswich, one in Beccles, and one in Saxmundham, of 102 altogether.

A CURIOUS CALCULATION.—Taking the French war indemnity in its English shape of 300,000,000*l*., payable in gold, it appears that the sovereigns composing it would weigh 1,363 tons, 17 cwt., 2 qrs., and 5 5/7 lbs. Piled one upon the other, they would reach a height of 197 miles, 2 furlongs, 11 poles, 1 yard, 2 feet, 3 inches. Placed edge to edge, they would extend 2,762 miles nearly; used for paving, they would cover more than 19 acres of ground; melted down, they would make a mass containing 2,811 cubic feet of solid metal; and, finally, supposing one man to count them over at the rate of 100 a minute for twelve hours a day, it would take him over 222 days to complete his task.

BOYS FOR THE NAVY.—Captain W. Gore Jones, Inspector of Training Ships, reports 2,931 boys recruited for the Navy in the year 1870. As many as 2,308 of them had been pursuing active or outdoor occupations. The list includes 502 tradesmen's boys, 518 errand boys, 561 boys connected with the building trade, 332 farm labourers, 266 schoolboys or clerks, only 182 factory boys. The large number of mason boys indicates continued depression in the building trade, and implies that a large proportion of the entries will always be owing to temporary depression in various occupations. As many as 702 of the boys were born in Middlesex, and 723 in Devonshire. The West of England boys, and also the Irish, are described as a fine type. London is being very carefully worked, and, on the whole, a first-class lad is obtained there. London sent 649, carefully selected out of large numbers; but comparatively few of the boys recruited were born in other large towns—only 44 in Liverpool, 55 in Manchester, 44 in Glasgow, 41 in Birmingham, 25 in Bristol. All the boys can read and write, and must be of a high physical standard to enable them to enter; yet the supply is more than equal to the demand. The school test, and the necessity of producing the writ-

ten consent of parents or friends, preclude any probability of street Arabs or boys convicted of crime being entered. The new diary, established and had a most direct influence in the recruiting, and boys have flocked in in consequence of letters from those already entered, describing the very good treatment they receive on board, especially in the matter of food.

FACETIÆ.

PEOPLE often speak of "a quotation within a quotation" as though it were something unusual; but we should like to know how these could possibly be a quotation without a quotation.

AT THE ACADEMY.—*Young Lady (indignant):* "Now, I told you, papa, this wasn't the fashionable hour. We'll have nothing but these horrid pictures to look at until the people come!"—*Punch.*

SOME one ambitious of doing a new thing has produced a wedding-card with the lady's maiden name ruled through above her marriage name. We presume this is to signify that she has come under rule.

PUNZLING.—Said Osborne to Gladstone, the other night, "Why are many of your measures like conundrums?" "Can't say," replied the solemn premier. "Because you're obliged to give them up," replied the Westminister wag, winking at Disraeli.—*Porcupine.*

NONSUITED.

Lawyer: "The coat's too long, the waistcoat's too long; in fact the entire suit's too long."

Tailor: "Dear me, sir, I'm very sorry; but the fact is, I—I thought that gentlemen of your profession preferred long suits."

DURING a fine starlight evening lately, a juvenile astronomer, after a silent and profound scrutiny of the heavens, asked his mother abruptly where the stars came from. Mamma replied, "I don't know, Willie." "Yes, you do, too." "No, Willie, I don't know where the stars came from." "Well, you bet I do. The moon laid 'em."

SCULLS FOR A SEAT OF LEARNING.—A reader of the *Times*, one day last week, among the particulars of its table of contents noticed a reference to "Oxford University Sculls." Eagerly turning out this suggestive heading, he found it to mean a rowing-match. He was greatly disappointed, being a phrenologist.—*Punch.*

IRONY OF EVENTS IN THE CITY.—Fancy the Lord Mayor having consented to preside at a public meeting on the subject of the Permissive Bill and the Licensing Reform, in Guildhall. Gog and Magog! What next? After a temperance meeting under the presidency of the Lord Mayor of London himself, held on the very site of the Lord Mayor's own feast, the next will probably be a vegetarian one.—*Punch.*

PHILOSOPHICAL BUT UNSATISFACTORY.

Guest: "How comes this dead fly in my soup?" *Waiter:* "In fact, sir, I have no positive idea how the poor thing came to his death. Perhaps it had not taken any food for a long time, dashed upon the soup, ate too much for it, and contracted an inflammation of the stomach that brought on death. The fly must have a very weak constitution, for when I served the soup it was dancing merrily upon the surface. Perhaps—and the idea presents itself only at this moment—it endeavoured to swallow too large a piece of vegetable, which remaining fast in the throat caused a choking in the windpipe. These are the only reasons I can give for the death of that insect."

NOT A NICE NAME.—The deafness of a woman has been the cause of a funny mistake, of which her infant child is the victim. She took this babe to church the other day to have him baptised, and while she was waiting near the font she thought she would keep him quiet by feeding him from a bottle of milk. While the child was still taking its milk the mother was summoned to the font. In her agitation she drew the bottle from the babe's mouth hurriedly, when the nozzle came off and the milk was spilled upon the child's new clothes. When the clergyman took the child in his arms, he looked down at it and asked the mother what name should be given it. She, with her mind troubled about the accident, thought he was asking how the clothing became soiled; so she answered, "Nozzle came off." Rather surprised, he asked again for the name, and she, thinking he did not understand her, bawled out, "Nozzle came off, I say!" Whereupon that astonished divine sprinkled water on the child's head, and said, "Nozzle came off Parkinson, I baptise thee," etc.

WHITSUNTIME AT THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

(TUESDAY MORNING.)

The Elephant: "Hullo, bruin, how pale you look! One would think you'd changed heads with the polar bear!"

Bruin: "Yes, it's the buns! There were 31,437

people here yesterday. They gave me 31,437 buns. You look rather bloated, and red about the nose. Buns, I suppose?"

The Elephant: "Yes. And ginger-beer, too, I'm sorry to say. One can't refuse."

The Ostrich: "Ah! I could manage buns and ginger-beer. It's the ginger-beer bottles, and brown paper, and rusty nails they give me. As for you, my dear"—to the giraffe—"you look more spotty than ever."

The Giraffe: "Ugh!"—*Lauch.*

SUGGESTION FOR THE NEXT BUDGET.—We are told that "the Bombay Government has thrown over the scheme of a tax on native feasts." This is a valuable hint, which ought not to be lost. Why should not the British Government take such a scheme up, and raise a large revenue by levying a tax on our native, our city feasts? The Corporation of London, the great companies, various sets of charity trustees, and other similar bodies, some of which hardly know how to dispose of their funds, would, we are sure, be only too glad to lessen the burdens now laid on the struggling and hard-working classes by paying the Chancellor of the Exchequer a fixed sum per month every time they sat down to a great dinner or banquet. The guests themselves, perhaps, might not object to be ruled in a moderate sum—they would relish the dainties set before them none the less if they felt they were doing something to relieve their less favoured countrymen, and help Mr. Lowe. (N.B. Turfite extra.)—*Punch.*

SPRING AND SUMMER TO THE POOR.

Spring and Summer may be glorious

To the wealthy and the grand,

Who can leave their city dwellings

For the Edens of the land,

But no tongue can tell the rapture

Of the needy, when they feel

First the balmy breath of Springtime

O'er their sluggish senses steal!

With what joy the ragged robin

Plucks the first wild flower that grows

Low behind the garden railing

Framed, perhaps, by lingering snows!

How he loves the little blossom!

How he pets the tiny thing,

That among the city's debris

Whispers gently, "It is Spring!"

With what joy the homely mother,

From her close and stifling room,

Takes the baby out for airing,

When the sweet June roses bloom!

See, the city parks are peopled—

Humble many, wealthy fewer—

Heaven has sent their yearly blessing—

Spring and Summer to the poor!

K. A.

GEMS.

NEVER mention what you wish should not be mentioned again.

BE industrious in business, intrepid in dangers, vigorous in acting, prudent in concerting, and prompt in executing.

PONDER every subject which demands your consideration with a careful and considerate attention; this is the only way to acquire knowledge.

THERE is no difference between knowledge and temperance; for he who knows what is good and embraces it, who knows what is bad and avoids it, is learned and temperate. But they who know very well what ought to be done, and yet do otherwise, are ignorant and stupid.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

PRESERVATION OF HONEY.—After the honey is passed from the comb, strain it through a sieve, so as to get out all the wax; gently boil it, and skim off the whitish foam which rises to the surface, and then the honey will become perfectly clear. The vessel for boiling should be earthen, brass, or tin. The honey should be put in jars when cool, and tightly covered. To keep honey in the comb, select combs free from pollen, pack them edgewise in jars or cans, and pour in a sufficient quantity of the boiled and strained honey (as above) to cover the combs. The jars or cans should be tightly tied over with thick cloth or leather. The writer says that these processes have been in use for twenty years with unvarying success.

AN UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION.—A remarkable occurrence is reported from Bideford. A swarm of bees from a garden in the neighbourhood appeared in a large train, and, failing to find a suitable set-

tlement elsewhere, fell on a man named Mills, and completely smothered his head and neck, keeping him spellbound for a considerable time. At last assistance arrived, and the bees were attracted away by the beating of fire-irons.

STATISTICS.

A STATISTICIAN estimates that there are now on the globe 1,288,000,000 souls, of which 360,000,000 are of the Caucasian race, 553,000,000 are of the Mongol race, 190,000,000 are of the Ethiopian race, 176,000,000 are of the Malay race, and 1,000,000 are of the Indo-American race. There are 8,642 languages spoken, and 1,000 different religions.

COLONIAL EXPENSES.—A Parliamentary return shows the cost of our colonies to the British Exchequer in 1868-9 was 3,962,779*l.*, less military contributions 333,204*l.*, and premium on bills 9,482*l.*—making the net total 3,620,586*l.* The following were the objects and amount of expenditure: Governors, 22,807*l.*; justices, 6,394*l.*; other salaries of clerks, etc., 1,725*l.*; pensions, 14,605*l.*; gaols, 183,591*l.*; fortifications and other military defences, 215,584*l.*; barracks, 161,563*l.*; lighthouses, 25,957*l.*; survey department, 2,060*l.*; Indian department, 16*l.*; ecclesiastical, 23,424*l.*; miscellaneous charges and aids, 36,625*l.*; cost of regular troops, 2,994,745*l.*; naval charges, 324,079*l.*; steamers, etc., 604*l.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE money order system was extended to Denmark on the 1st of June.

It is said that a cottagers' baby show is about to be held at Fenge.

THE eldest daughter of the King of the Belgians has been very ill, but is recovering.

A TREMENDOUS volcanic eruption, accompanied by an earthquake, has taken place in the Island of Rea or Ehio, and 400 persons have perished.

In consequence of the death of Sir John Herschel Sir J. Shaw Lefevre becomes the oldest living Senior Wrangler, having attained that distinction in 1818.

A STURGEON weighing one hundredweight and three-quarters and measuring between seven and eight feet has been caught in the Dee.

THE population of London enumerated as living at midnight on Sunday, April 2, was 3,251,904, an increase of 447,815 in ten years.

Two city churches are about to be removed under the Bishop of London's Act—All Hallows, Staining, and St. Mildred's, Poitry.

AN eminent physician declares that spiritualism is a disease, and can be cured by tincture of iron and strychnine.

THE south-east wing of the royal palace of Holyrood House is in progress of being handsomely furnished, in case Her Majesty should choose to spend a day or two there in the autumn.

PRINCESS CHRISTIAN, who was for some time confined to the house by congestion of the lungs, has been convalescent and out walking and driving daily during the last week.

THERE are at present no fewer than eight public exhibitions of pictures open in London, besides the galleries of dealers, the National Gallery, and the South Kensington Museum.

THE King of Wurtemberg has given Herr Edward Singer the gold medal for art and science, in consideration of the services rendered to the cause of music by that gentleman.

THE Duc d'Anmale, who is now in a good many men's thoughts, is reported to have an income of 100,000*l.* a-year, inherited from the Duc de Bourbon, the father of the famous Duc d'Enghien.

A DISPATCH from Berlin states that the enormous number of 16,000 French prisoners have died in captivity. The number has been verified by returns made to the English Embassy.

It has been ascertained that out of 1,500 salmon eggs in the ordinary course of nature only one produces a mature salmon. If all the eggs laid were to produce salmon the ocean in half a century would be a moving mass of that fish.

AFTER June the International Exhibition will have some increased attractions. Some foreign pictures of world-wide fame are coming over next month. The contemplated additions are spoken of with enthusiasm by art critics.

THE Duke of Edinburgh has no idea of idling, and expresses a hope that the Admiralty will give him command of another ship shortly. If His Royal Highness has not influence sufficient, we hope Mr. Goschen will consider our recommendation and the prince's past good services as of some weight.

THE thirty-six English sparrows imported at Richmond, Virginia, in 1839, have multiplied so much that they now, with their progeny, number over 500. In New York the English sparrows have not only established themselves, but they have driven all the other small birds out.

If You become a Nun, Dear.

Words from the Italian,
By LEIGH HUNT.

SONG.

The Music by R. GUILATI.

VOICE. *Vivace.*

1 If you become a nun, dear, A
2 If you become a nun, dear, A

PIANO. *Allegro. Scherzo.* *p* *cres.* *f* *p*

dolce. *ad lib.*

fri - ar I will be; In an - y cell you run, dear, Pray look be - hind for
bish - op Love will be; The cu - pids, ev - ry one, dear, Will chant we trust in

lento.

me. The ro - ses will turn pale, And the doves will take the veil, And the tide no lon - ger
thee. The in - cense will go sigh - ing, The can - dles fall a - dy - - ing, The sun will cease to

Jocoso. *lento e dolce.* *ad lib.*

flow. What! you be - come a nun,..... love, I'll not be - lieve it, no! no, no, no, no! I'll
glow. What! you go take the vows,..... love? I'll not be - lieve it, no! &c.

colla voce.

ad lib.

not be - lieve it, no!.....

f *cres.* *Spa.*

If you become a nun, dear,
A bishop Love will be;
The cupids, every one, dear,
Will chant we trust in thee.

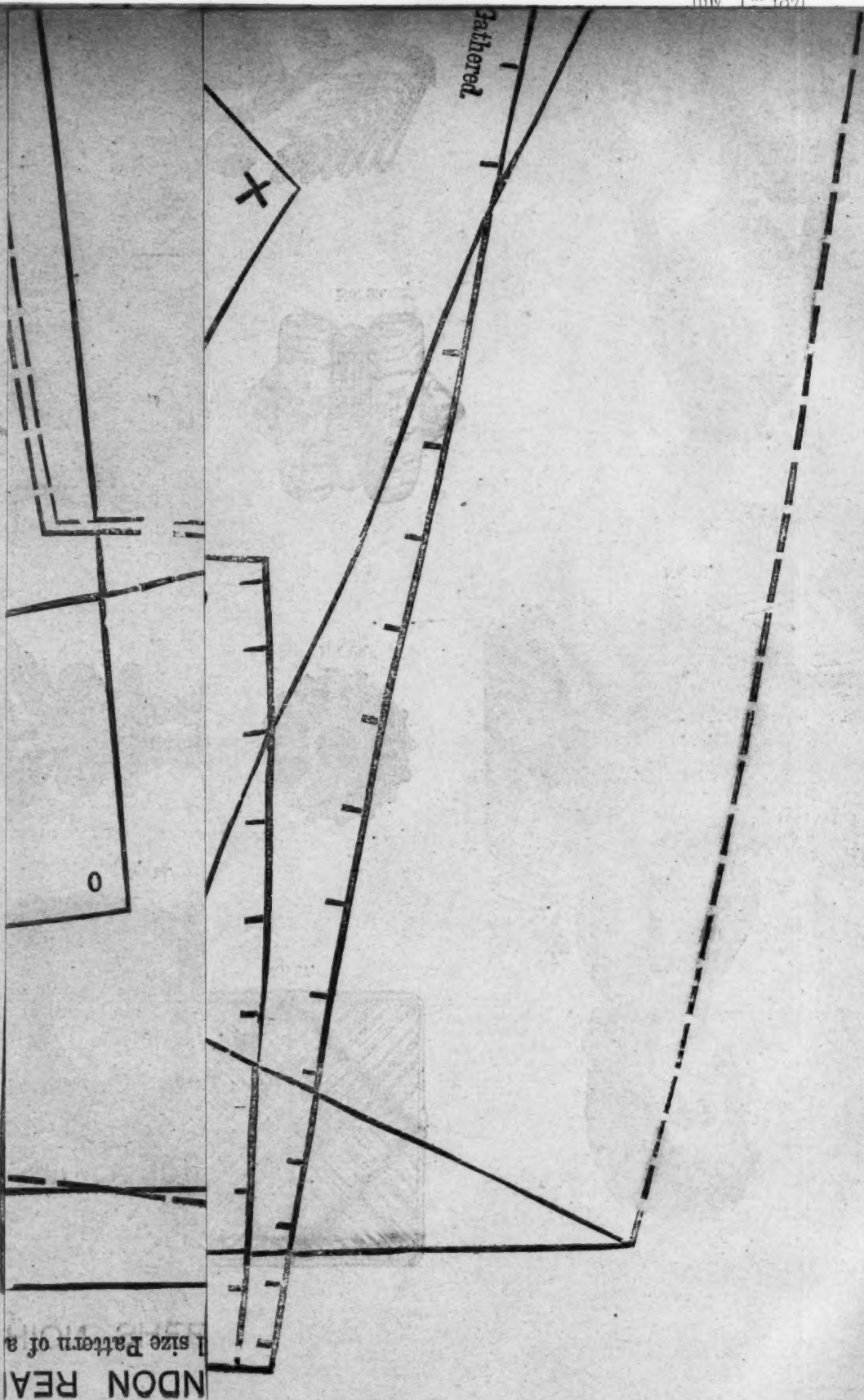
The incense will go sighing,
The candles fall a-dying,
The sun will cease to glow,
What! you go take the vows, love?
I'll not believe it, no!

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July 1th 1871



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PAGES. 192

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July 1th 1871



LONDON-READER

Latest Paris Modes